

1 **REVISION 1:**

2 **Crystal Structure and Hydration/Dehydration Behavior of a  $\text{Na}_2\text{Mg}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 16\text{H}_2\text{O}$ : a New**  
3 **Hydrate Phase Observed under Mars-Relevant Conditions**

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8 **ABSTRACT**

9 Hydrated evaporite minerals have the ability to hold large amounts of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , making them a  
10 potential source of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  in cold, low- $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  environments such as the surface of Mars. Many of  
11 these hydrated evaporite minerals experience a reversible change in hydration state in response to  
12 changes in temperature (T) and relative humidity (RH). Such phases may thus have the potential  
13 to interact with the martian atmosphere on a daily or seasonal basis. The  $\text{Na}_2\text{Mg}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$   
14 system was previously thought to contain three hydrated phases: a decahydrate ( $n = 10$ ), konyaite  
15 ( $n = 5$ ), and blöndite ( $n = 4$ ). We examined this system using temperature- and RH-controlled X-  
16 ray powder diffraction (XRD) methods, as well as temperature-controlled single-crystal X-ray  
17 diffraction. When blöndite was exposed to sub-freezing conditions,  $T \leq -10^\circ\text{C}$ , a new phase was  
18 produced ( $n = 16$ , 52 wt. % $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ). Similar low-temperature behavior has been documented in the  
19  $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$  system, through the presence of meridianiite (Peterson et al., 2007). The hydration  
20 and dehydration behavior of phases in the  $\text{Na}_2\text{Mg}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$  system was evaluated with powder  
21 XRD from  $-30$  to  $>25^\circ\text{C}$  and from  $\sim 99$  to near 0% RH, and single-crystal XRD data were  
22 collected for the  $n = 16$  phase at  $-120^\circ\text{C}$ . The 16-hydrate is triclinic, space group P-1 {note to  
23 typesetting: P bar-over-one}, with unit-cell parameters  $a = 6.5590(12) \text{ \AA}$ ,  $b = 6.6277(14) \text{ \AA}$ ,  $c =$

24 14.441(3) Å,  $\alpha = 87.456(15)^\circ$ ,  $\beta = 79.682(15)^\circ$ ,  $\gamma = 65.847(13)^\circ$  and a unit cell volume of 563.3(2)  
25 Å<sup>3</sup>. The existence of this new phase at low temperatures, its high hydration state, and its ability to  
26 form reversibly from blödite all suggest that if phases in this system exist on the martian surface,  
27 they will participate in the Mars H<sub>2</sub>O cycle.

28 **Keywords:** Mars, Sulfate, Blödite, Konyaite, Efflorescence, Meridianiite

## 29 INTRODUCTION

30 Limited liquid water stability on the martian surface suggests that hydration and dehydration of  
31 minerals with changes in temperature (T) and relative humidity (RH) during a Mars sol have the  
32 potential to influence the (bio)availability of water and potentially affect the atmospheric H<sub>2</sub>O  
33 concentration. An increasing inventory of hydrous evaporite and silicate minerals has been  
34 identified from orbital and lander data on Mars (e.g., Ehlmann et al., 2009). Hydrous sulfate  
35 minerals are known to be present on Mars, based on spectral, chemical, and geomorphic  
36 observations (e.g., CRISM, OMEGA, and Mars Exploration Rover results). In the early 2000s,  
37 OMEGA/Mars Express imaged light patches in the martian soil, interpreted to be efflorescence.  
38 Spectral data indicated the presence of kieserite, gypsum, and polyhydrated sulfates, possibly  
39 epsomite, on the surface (Gendrin et al., 2005). Bassanite has also been suggested on Mars based  
40 on spectral data (Wray et al., 2010). Gypsum has been identified on the martian surface on many  
41 occasions using spectroscopic observations (e.g., Langevin et al., 2005; Squyres et al., 2012), and  
42 anhydrite was recently identified by the CheMin instrument in an aeolian bedform in Gale crater  
43 (Bish et al., LPSC, 2013). Sulfate minerals are of particular interest due to the ability of many of  
44 them to hydrate reversibly, some on the scale of a martian sol. For example, meridianiite  
45 (MgSO<sub>4</sub>·11H<sub>2</sub>O) occurs only below 2 °C (Peterson et al., 2007) and incongruently melts above

46 that temperature to form less-hydrated  $\text{MgSO}_4$  phases such as epsomite or hexahydrate (Chou and  
47 Seal, 2007).

48 Phases in the  $\text{Na}_2\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$  system were predicted to occur on Mars by Clark and Van Hart  
49 (1981) based on X-ray fluorescence (XRF) chemical analyses on the Viking lander. King et al.  
50 (2004) also predicted phases in this system based on groundwater compositions of igneous rocks  
51 on Earth. Many of these groundwaters on Earth are concentrated in Mg, Ca, Na, K,  $\text{SO}_4$ ,  
52  $\text{HCO}_3/\text{CO}_3$ , and Cl. Evolution of these groundwaters, which should be acidic and sulfate-rich  
53 (Bishop et al. 2005), is predicted to form bl□dite based on the compositional diagram from King  
54 et al. (2004).

55 This study examined the behavior of solid phases in the Na-Mg- $\text{SO}_4$ - $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  system under Mars-  
56 relevant conditions to determine the potential for phases to participate in the martian  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  cycle.  
57 Our experiments represent the first to describe this system's behavior under low-temperature  
58 conditions and are the first to describe this highly hydrated, low-temperature phase. Bl□dite was  
59 the starting material for all experiments, and no intermediate phases (between bl□dite and the  
60 newly described 16-hydrate phase) were observed during these experiments. Bl□dite  
61 ( $\text{Na}_2\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) is the stable hydrate at room temperature, and it was analyzed by powder X-  
62 ray diffraction (XRD) under controlled RH-T conditions to investigate mineral reactions. When  
63 bl□dite was exposed to low temperatures ( $T < 0^\circ\text{C}$ ), two different results were observed. One set  
64 of experiments produced a higher hydrate in the  $\text{Na}_2\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$  system, which was investigated  
65 via powder and single-crystal XRD methods. The resulting data were used to define experimental  
66 stability conditions and the crystal structure of the new phase. Other experiments resulted in  
67 reaction of bl□dite to form two single-cation salts.

## 68 **EXPERIMENTAL METHODS**

## 69 **Powder X-ray Diffraction**

70 A natural blödite sample from Soda Lake, California, was used for all analyses. XRD data  
71 were obtained for dry samples and for those that had been previously deliquesced in a 100% RH  
72 chamber (all natural blödite samples showed no evidence of having deliquesced prior to our  
73 experiments and were pure blödite). Powder XRD data were obtained at Indiana University in the  
74 Department of Geological Sciences using a Bruker D8Advance diffractometer with a Vantec  
75 position-sensitive detector (Cu radiation:  $\lambda = 1.5406 \text{ \AA}$ ). Data were collected using a variety of  $2\theta$   
76 ranges, mostly between  $15\text{-}55^\circ$ , all with a step size of  $0.01682^\circ$ , a variety of scan speeds ( $0.45 -$   
77  $1.0 \text{ sec/step}$ ), and a  $0.6 \text{ mm}$  divergence slit. This instrument is equipped with an Anton-Paar TTK  
78 450 temperature-control stage that was used for measurements under non-ambient, RH- and T-  
79 controlled conditions to produce the experimental stability diagrams. Cooling was achieved by  
80 circulation of chilled methanol through the base of the stage, and sample temperature was held  
81 constant using the heater of the TTK stage. The sample stage is contained within an  
82 environmental cell that can be open to air, put under vacuum, or exposed to controlled RH.  
83 Controlled-RH conditions were generated using an InstruQuest V-Gen dew point/RH generator.  
84 Roughing-pump vacuum conditions were also used for generating low-RH conditions for low-  
85 temperature ( $-30$  to  $-50 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ ) experiments. The RH for these experiments was calculated using the  
86 room  $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  (determined by measuring room RH and T) at 1 atm using Equation 1. The V-Gen RH  
87 generator is designed to produce RH values as low as 1% RH, although we successfully operated  
88 to  $\sim 0.5\%$  RH. Controlled-RH conditions  $\leq 0.5\%$  at room temperature were required for  
89 experiments below  $-30 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ , and we used a roughing pump to lower the environmental chamber  
90 pressure on both dry and humid days for these measurements.

91 
$$P_{\text{H}_2\text{O,vac}} = P_{\text{H}_2\text{O,rm}} \left( \frac{P_{\text{vac}}}{P_{\text{room}}} \right) \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

92 The rates of hydration/dehydration reactions are important in determining whether the reactions  
93 have the potential to contribute to the martian diurnal H<sub>2</sub>O cycle. Thermogravimetric analysis  
94 (TGA) is often used to study the dehydration reaction kinetics of minerals, but we did not have  
95 access to an instrument that allowed control of both RH and T at sub-ambient temperatures. As an  
96 alternative, we used time-resolved XRD in an attempt to quantify the rates of hydration and  
97 dehydration reactions. These measurements used the Vantec detector in fixed-detector mode (6°  
98 2θ detector window), making an individual measurement every 20 sec while monitoring RH and  
99 T. RH was set to a fixed value (at 23 ± 0.5 °C) while slowly decreasing T from 0 °C to -40 °C  
100 (thereby causing an increase in RH over the specimen) in order to study hydration rates. These  
101 data were intended to provide information on abundances of phases (through Rietveld analysis) as  
102 a function of temperature. Unfortunately, formation of the new phase in the mount caused  
103 significant preferred orientation, adversely affecting quantitative analyses and making these  
104 measurements unsuitable for kinetic studies.

### 105 **Single-Crystal X-ray Diffraction**

106 Data used in the determination of the structure of the 16-hydrate phase were obtained using a  
107 Bruker Kappa ApexII Duo diffractometer (Mo radiation:  $\lambda = 0.7107 \text{ \AA}$ ) at the Indiana University  
108 Molecular Structure Center (IUMSC). Data were collected while the crystal was under a nitrogen  
109 cold stream at -123 °C. The sample used was previously deliquesced, natural bl□dite from Soda  
110 Lake, CA. This deliquesced sample was stored in a freezer at -10 °C (RH buffered by ice to  
111 100%RH) for two weeks prior to analysis. The approximately 0.5 x 0.2 x 0.1 mm crystal was  
112 mounted at room temperature, having been exposed to room RH and T (average 23-24 °C, 30-  
113 40% RH) for less than 10 min before being mounted onto a MiTeGen micromount under a cold  
114 nitrogen stream. The RH during the single-crystal experiment is unknown, but the cold stream

115 was not contained within an environmental cell, allowing it to mix with the surrounding air. Thus  
116 the RH was apparently high enough to keep the crystal hydrated; at the temperature of the sample,  
117 very little H<sub>2</sub>O is required to reach high effective relative humidities.

## 118 **Chemical Analysis**

119 Powder XRD data for the starting bl□dite sample showed no evidence of any additional  
120 phases, although the sample is dark colored. The chemical composition of the bl□dite sample  
121 used for all experiments was measured by atomic absorption spectroscopy using a Perkin Elmer  
122 AAnalyst 800 for cation concentrations and an Eltra CS-200 elemental analyzer for total carbon  
123 (TC) and total sulfur (TS). An aliquot of the original sample was dissolved with nitric acid and  
124 diluted for graphite furnace analysis (AAnalyst). This solution was used to analyze for K, Ca, and  
125 Fe, and all were present at  $<6 \times 10^{-3}$  mol element per mol bl□dite. An Eltra CS-2000 elemental  
126 analyzer was used for total carbon (TC) concentration determination, yielding a TC concentration  
127 of 0.054 wt. % ( $\sigma=0.0001$  wt. %). Our interpretation of the TC measurements is that the source of  
128 the color was admixed organic material, although the source is unimportant at this low  
129 concentration. These data support the assumption that any non-bl□dite material did not contribute  
130 to the overall chemistry of the sample.

## 131 **RESULTS**

### 132 **Na<sub>2</sub>Mg(SO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·16H<sub>2</sub>O**

133 New diffraction peaks were observed when bl□dite was exposed to -10 °C and analyzed via  
134 time-resolved X-ray powder diffraction (47-78% RH). These new peaks persisted at temperatures  
135 as low as -123 °C (as evidenced by the single-crystal diffraction measurements). In an attempt to  
136 explain these peaks, the structures of potential reaction products listed in Table 1 were used to  
137 perform Rietveld analysis of the powder data in Bruker's TOPAS program. The poor fit of these  
138 known phases to the data led us to conclude that the unexplained peaks represented a new phase.

139 Structure determination by powder diffraction was attempted, but the rates of the hydration  
140 reaction were such that it was difficult to obtain a sample with only the 16-hydrate crystalline  
141 phase. In addition, the XRD intensities were affected by preferred orientation created when the  
142 phase crystallized in situ. Single-crystal methods were therefore employed for solution of the  
143 structure. Crystals of the 16-hydrate were formed by first allowing bl□dite to deliquesce in a  
144 100%RH atmosphere at room temperature. This material was then stored in a -10 °C freezer,  
145 resulting in crystallization of the 16-hydrate. Once mounted, the single crystal was allowed to  
146 cool to -123 °C in an N<sub>2</sub> stream for approximately thirty min prior to data collection while several  
147 indexing attempts were made. Indexing gave a symmetry and unit cell inconsistent with bl□dite.  
148 The crystal remained in the N<sub>2</sub> stream for an additional thirty min to allow the sample to  
149 equilibrate before data collection began. Initial indexing of the single-crystal data gave space  
150 group P-1 {note to typesetting: same as in intro} with unit-cell parameters of  $a \cong 6.56 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $b \cong 6.63$   
151  $\text{ \AA}$ ,  $c \cong 14.4 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $\alpha \cong 87.4^\circ$ ,  $\beta \cong 79.7^\circ$ ,  $\gamma \cong 65.9^\circ$ , yielding a unit cell volume  $\cong 563 \text{ \AA}^3$ . These  
152 preliminary results were used with the original powder XRD data to perform a Le Bail  
153 refinement, shown in Figure 1.

154 The single-crystal data were analyzed using the charge-flipping method with Oxford Crystals  
155 (Betteridge et al, 2003) for structure solution. Table 2 shows the unit-cell parameters of the  
156 triclinic (P-1) structure and atom positions from the single-crystal structure solution. This  
157 structure was determined using 2,537 reflections ( $GooF = 0.9339$ ,  $R_w = 10.97\%$  and  $R = 3.91\%$ ).  
158 A stoichiometry of Na<sub>2</sub>Mg(SO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub> was used for this solution and all Na and Mg cations and sulfate  
159 tetrahedra were identified. H<sub>2</sub>O molecules were assigned to unidentified electron density on  
160 difference-Fourier maps, similar to the process used by Peterson and Wang (2006) for the  
161 meridianiite crystal structure solution. O-H bond lengths for the 16-hydrate were constrained

162 based on the neutron diffraction structure of meridianiite at a comparable temperature (Fortes,  
163 2008). Table 3 shows a calculated XRD pattern for this material.

164 Structure solution yielded a formula of  $\text{Na}_2\text{Mg}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 16\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ; as noted above, this hydration  
165 state was not confirmed by TGA. Figure 2 compares the crystal structures of blödite and the 16-  
166 hydrate. Mg and Na are octahedrally coordinated by  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  molecules, creating planes of octahedra.  
167 The 16-hydrate structure contains independent sulfate tetrahedra with alternating up/down  
168 orientations along the *b* axis between these planes of octahedra. Isolated  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  molecules are H-  
169 bonded to the sulfate oxygen atoms.

170 Bond distances were compared with those from published crystal structures having similar  
171 bonding environments to evaluate the 16-hydrate structure (Table 4). Published bond distances for  
172 meridianiite and mirabilite were used to evaluate S-O distances for the 16-hydrate. The average S-  
173 O distance in meridianiite is 1.451 Å (Fortes et al., 2008), 1.463 Å in mirabilite (Levy and  
174 Lisensky, 1978), and 1.477 Å in the 16-hydrate. Mg-O distances and Na-O distances in the 16-  
175 hydrate were compared with those in blödite (Hawthorne, 1985). The average Mg-O distance in  
176 blödite is 2.076 Å vs. 2.057 Å for the 16-hydrate. Na-O bonds yielded similar results, with 2.421  
177 Å in blödite and 2.418 Å in the 16-hydrate. The temperature of data collection for blödite was not  
178 reported and was assumed to have been 22 °C. The low-temperature collection of the 16-hydrate  
179 data may account for small observed differences in bond lengths.

180 The single-crystal structure was subsequently used in a Rietveld refinement with the powder  
181 XRD data, yielding a unit cell similar to that of the initial TOPAS Le Bail refinement. The 16-  
182 hydrate phase crystallized in the mount during the experiment, producing a sample with a high  
183 degree of preferred orientation. Therefore a fourth-order spherical-harmonics preferred orientation  
184 correction was used in the refinements. Results of the Rietveld refinement are shown in Figure 3.



185 The experimental setup described previously (i.e., TTK stage and V-Gen) was used to expose this  
186 mineral to a range of conditions in RH/T space, and XRD data were measured for these  
187 conditions. Only bl□dite was present under conditions represented by gray dots, and black boxes  
188 indicate the presence of the 16-hydrate phase. The shaded area in Figure 4 represents the range of  
189 RH/T conditions measured by the Viking lander 1 (Savijärvi, 1995). Konyaite and the  
190 decahydrate phase were not observed in any measurement.

191 In an attempt to produce only the 16-hydrate, experiments were performed by storing bl□dite  
192 (either dry or in deliquesced mush form) at -10 °C for several days in a freezer. These  
193 experiments sometimes produced a mixture of mirabilite ( $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4 \cdot 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ; 56 wt. %  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) and a  
194 hydrous  $\text{MgSO}_4$  phase, either meridianiite ( $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 11\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ; 62 wt. %  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) or epsomite  
195 ( $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ; 51 wt. %  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), depending on RH and T conditions. Circumstantial evidence (e.g.,  
196 high background and insufficient  $\text{Na}_2(\text{SO}_4)$  phases to account for initial stoichiometry, determined  
197 through Rietveld analysis) for amorphous sodium sulfate in association with epsomite was also  
198 observed under lower-RH conditions.

## 199 **DISCUSSION**

200 RH and T are critical independent variables determining hydrous mineral stability, especially in  
201 low- $P_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$  conditions. However, although observation of new phases may indicate relative  
202 thermodynamic stability of phases, the rates of reactions at the low temperatures found on the  
203 martian surface may be sufficiently slow that the reaction times used here were insufficient to  
204 yield the true stable phase assemblage. For this reason, we refer to Figure 4 as an experimental  
205 stability diagram. The RH-T cycle over a Mars late summer day ~23 °N of the equator is  
206 represented by the shaded area on Figure 4, as observed by the Mars Viking lander 1 (Savijärvi,  
207 1995). This region is encompassed by the projected experimental stability field of the 16-hydrate

208 phase, suggesting that this phase would be stable under conditions occurring in the martian mid-  
209 latitude regions. The highest reported temperature from the Phoenix lander, at  $\sim 68^\circ\text{N}$ , is  $\sim -23$   
210  $^\circ\text{C}$ , with temperatures down to  $\sim -82^\circ\text{C}$  (Zent et al., 2010). Our data suggest that the  
211 hydration/dehydration reaction would not occur at these higher latitudes and instead the hydrated  
212 phase would be the stable phase in this system. The Curiosity REMS (Rover Environmental  
213 Monitoring Station) instrument, which landed  $\sim 5^\circ\text{S}$  of the equator, has returned temperature data  
214 as high as  $8^\circ\text{C}$  ([marsweather.com/data](http://marsweather.com/data)). Blöndite is the stable phase at this temperature, but the  
215 REMS instrument has also recorded temperatures as low as  $-78^\circ\text{C}$ . This temperature is well  
216 within the stability field of the 16-hydrate, suggesting that phases in this system could transform  
217 on a diurnal cycle if they exist in Gale Crater. Indeed, even small amounts of such phases ( $\ll 1\%$ )  
218 could potentially responsible for the weak cementation that has been observed in some martian  
219 surficial deposits.

220 Whether the 16-hydrate phase is truly thermodynamically stable is questionable; approximately  
221 20 - 30% of the experiments in which RH/T conditions favored the 16-hydrate phase resulted  
222 instead in formation of two single-cation salts. The separation of the system into two phases could  
223 be interpreted to indicate that the single-cation salts are thermodynamically preferred at these low  
224 temperatures. Alternatively, Spencer (2000) suggested that blöndite is more soluble than epsomite  
225 and thenardite at room temperature. This implies the separation could have occurred between  
226 analyses, during storage at room temperature as a deliquesced solution. Each aliquot of sample  
227 was reused for several low-temperature XRD analyses, and in some cases, aliquots were only  
228 analyzed and confirmed to be blöndite when the sample was first put into the XRD sample mount.  
229 These were not reanalyzed at room temperature between individual low-temperature experiments.  
230 It is possible that the presence of two single-cation phases reflects instability of blöndite during

231 storage at room temperature, rather than the lack of stability of the 16-hydrate at the RH/T  
232 conditions of interest as mineralogy was not monitored prior to or during the cooling process. As  
233 the system contained the 16-hydrate throughout prolonged low-temperature experiments, we  
234 believe that it is likely a stable phase and that in some cases bl□dite had converted to two phases  
235 before the experimental trial commenced.

236 Konyaite and decahydrate did not participate in the hydration/dehydration cycles in our  
237 experiments. The decahydrate (Leduc et al., 2009) forms when this system first produces a  
238 crystalline phase from solution under average Earth-surface conditions. This phase readily  
239 dehydrates to konyaite and then to the stable phase at these conditions, bl□dite. Hydration of  
240 bl□dite at room temperature was not observed, despite exposure to RH values approaching  
241 saturation. However, when exposed to high RH values at low temperature, hydration of bl□dite in  
242 our experiments bypassed these intermediate hydrates and formed the 16-hydrate. Dehydration of  
243 this phase to bl□dite when exposed to temperatures above -10 °C yields a ~ 39 wt. % loss due to  
244 release of H<sub>2</sub>O. This large H<sub>2</sub>O loss illustrates the capacity of this system to store significant H<sub>2</sub>O,  
245 making these phases another potential source of episodic liquid water on the surface of Mars.

246 The rates of these reactions are sufficiently rapid that this hydration/dehydration cycle would  
247 occur at the equator on the time scale of a martian sol, based on the observed hydration of  
248 samples stored at low temperatures (-21 °C) overnight (<12 hrs). The dehydration reaction would  
249 be expected to occur wherever the daytime T exceeded -10 °C. If phases in the Na<sub>2</sub>Mg(SO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>-H<sub>2</sub>O  
250 system occur on Mars, as suggested by Clark and Van Hart (1981) and King et al. (1984), our  
251 results show that hydration/dehydration reactions between the 4- and 16-hydrate will occur over  
252 much of the martian surface and that the 16-hydrate would be the stable phase in polar regions.

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**REVISION 1:**

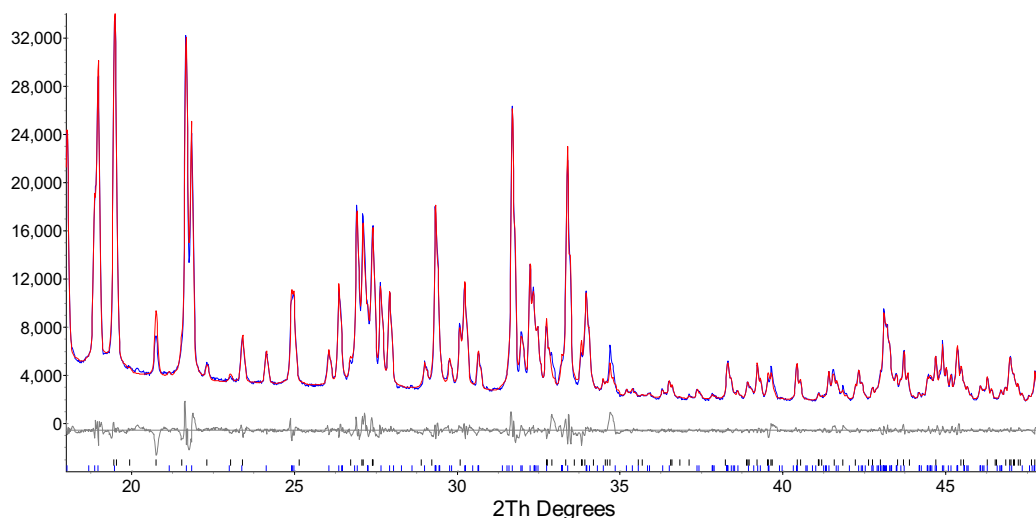


Figure 1: Results of Le Bail refinement using space group P-1 determined from single-crystal methods to fit previously unexplained peaks (blue: observed data; red: Le Bail fit; grey (below): difference). Vertical tic marks at the bottom of the plot represent the theoretical positions of blödite (black) and 16-hydrate reflections (blue).

Table 1: Crystalline phases used in Rietveld analysis			
Phase Name	Formula	Phase Name	Formula
<b>Blödite</b>	Na <sub>2</sub> Mg(SO <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ·4H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Hexahydrate</b>	MgSO <sub>4</sub> ·6H <sub>2</sub> O
<b>Konyaite</b>	Na <sub>2</sub> Mg(SO <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ·5H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Epsomite</b>	MgSO <sub>4</sub> ·7H <sub>2</sub> O
<b>Decahydrate</b>	Na <sub>2</sub> Mg(SO <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ·10H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Meridianiite</b>	MgSO <sub>4</sub> ·11H <sub>2</sub> O
<b>Kieserite</b>	MgSO <sub>4</sub> ·H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Löweite</b>	Na <sub>12</sub> Mg <sub>7</sub> (SO <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>13</sub> ·15H <sub>2</sub> O
<b>Sanderite</b>	MgSO <sub>4</sub> ·2H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Matteuccite</b>	NaHSO <sub>4</sub> ·H <sub>2</sub> O
<b>Starkeyite</b>	MgSO <sub>4</sub> ·4H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Vanthoffite</b>	Na <sub>6</sub> Mg(SO <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>4</sub>
<b>Pentahydrate</b>	MgSO <sub>4</sub> ·5H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Thenardite</b>	Na <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>
<b>Ice</b>	H <sub>2</sub> O	<b>Mirabilite</b>	Na <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub> ·10H <sub>2</sub> O

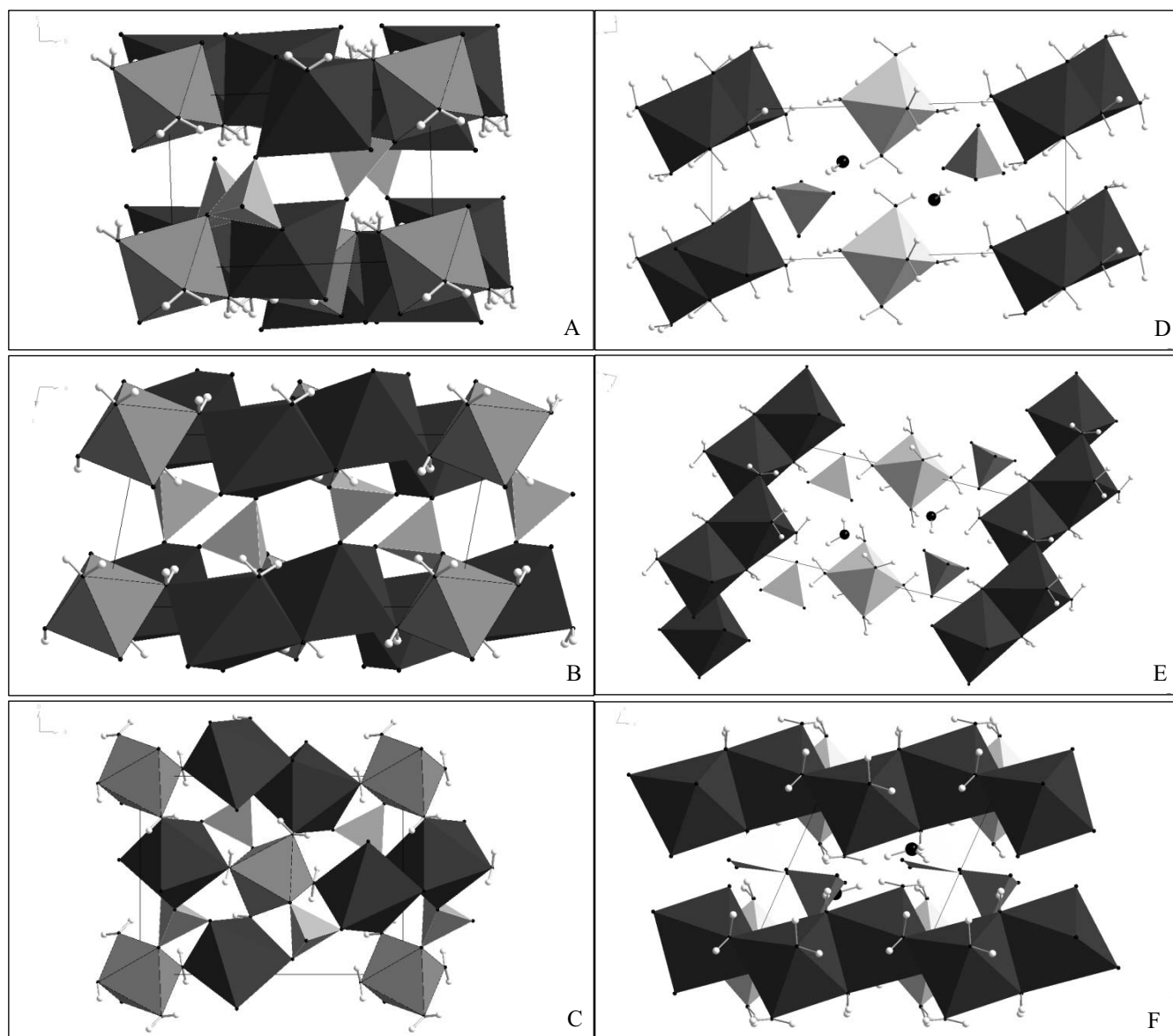


Figure 2: Comparison of blödite (left) and 16-hydrate (right) structures. Left images are projections down the  $a$  (A),  $b$  (B), and  $c$  (C) axes of blödite. Darker octahedra represent Na atoms octahedrally coordinated by  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . Lighter grey octahedra represent Mg atoms octahedrally coordinated by  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . Grey tetrahedra are sulfate ( $\text{SO}_4$ ) tetrahedra coordinated by O. Right images are projections down the  $a$  (D),  $b$  (E), and  $c$  (F) axes of the 16-hydrate. As in the blödite images, Na octahedra are in a darker grey than Mg octahedra, and sulfate tetrahedra are in a medium hue. Note isolated  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  molecules between cation layers.

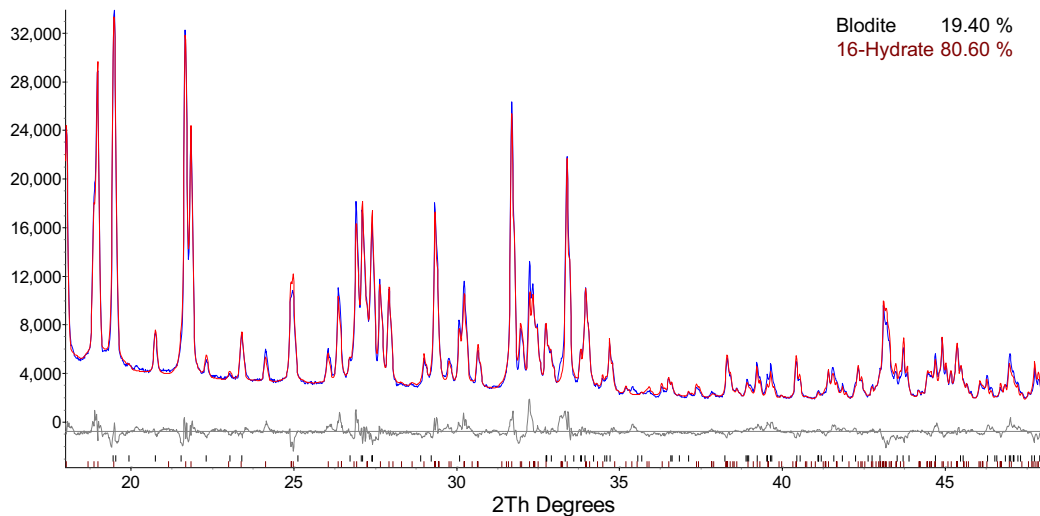


Figure 3: Rietveld analysis of powder XRD data using the single-crystal structure data; blue: observed data; red: model pattern; black: difference. Vertical tic marks at the bottom of the plot represent the theoretical positions of blödite (black) and 16-hydrate (brown) reflections.



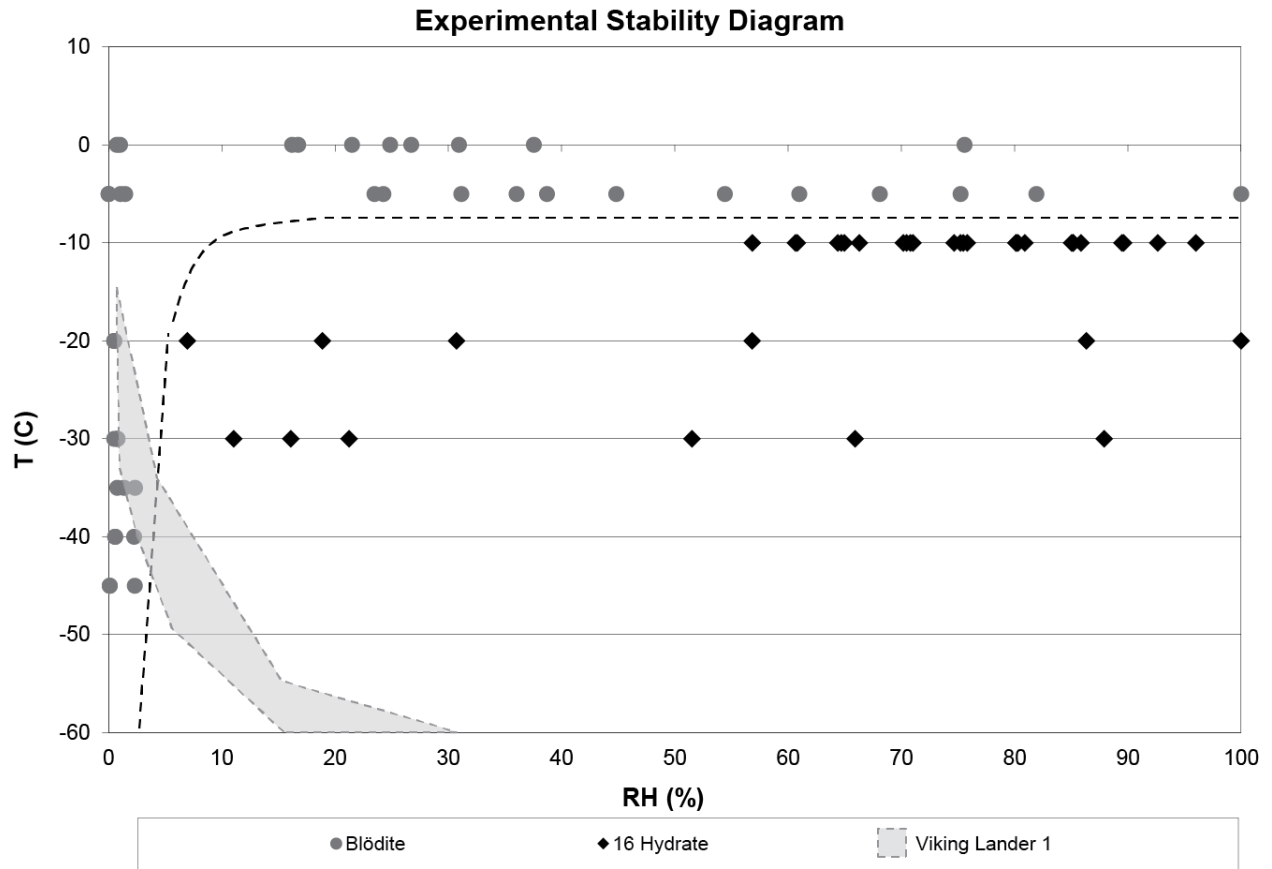


Figure 4: RH/T data showing occurrences of blödite and the 16-hydrate phase, with Viking lander 1(Savijärvi, 1995) RH/T data overlain.

**Table 2: Unit-Cell Parameters, Isotropic Displacement Parameters, and Atom Positions for Na<sub>2</sub>Mg(SO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·16H<sub>2</sub>O**

<i>a</i> (Å)	6.559(1)	<i>α</i> (°)	87.46(2)	
<i>b</i> (Å)	6.628(1)	<i>β</i> (°)	79.68(2)	
<i>c</i> (Å)	14.441(3)	<i>γ</i> (°)	65.85(1)	
Atom	x	y	z	U <sub>iso</sub>
Na	0.2484(2)	0.9483(2)	0.04994(7)	0.017
Mg	0	0	0.5	0.014
S	0.7611(1)	0.6075(1)	0.25526(4)	0.012
O1	0.7023(3)	0.8471(3)	0.2467(1)	0.017
O2	0.6359(3)	0.5698(3)	0.3449(1)	0.018
O3	0.0080(3)	0.4899(3)	0.2537(1)	0.017
O4	0.6996(3)	0.5250(3)	0.1757(1)	0.019
O5	0.3213(3)	0.9745(3)	0.4464(1)	0.019
O6	-0.0307(3)	0.9505(3)	0.3623(1)	0.021
O7	0.1216(3)	0.6675(3)	0.5202(1)	0.019
O8	0.2930(3)	0.5923(3)	0.1141(1)	0.019
O9	0.3324(3)	0.2516(3)	-0.0048(1)	0.021
O10	0.1614(3)	0.9057(3)	-0.1004(1)	0.019
O11	0.2517(3)	0.0390(3)	0.2102(1)	0.019
O12	0.3352(3)	0.3641(3)	0.3709(1)	0.022
H1	0.288(7)	0.351(5)	-0.057(2)	0.05*
H2	0.398(4)	0.994(6)	0.230(3)	0.05
H3	0.202(6)	0.603(6)	0.572(2)	0.05
H4	0.204(7)	0.989(6)	-0.151(2)	0.05
H5	0.446(5)	0.844(4)	0.415(2)	0.05
H6	0.425(4)	0.562(6)	0.142(2)	0.05
H7	0.286(7)	0.377(4)	0.039(2)	0.05
H8	-0.154(5)	0.948(7)	0.335(3)	0.05
H9	0.457(5)	0.409(6)	0.347(3)	0.05
H10	0.224(5)	0.428(6)	0.331(2)	0.05
H11	0.347(7)	0.100(4)	0.419(3)	0.05
H12	0.070(5)	0.966(6)	0.308(2)	0.05
H13	0.188(5)	0.581(7)	0.167(2)	0.05
H14	0.202(6)	0.564(5)	0.467(2)	0.05
H15	0.175(6)	0.198(3)	0.224(3)	0.05
H16	0.198(7)	0.767(4)	-0.131(2)	0.05

\*All H-atom displacement parameters were fixed at 0.05.

**Table 3: Calculated XRD pattern for the 16-hydrate**

Intensity (arbitrary)	<i>d</i> (Å)	<i>h</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>
333	5.498	0	1	1
631	5.367	1	1	1
674	5.13	-1	0	1
348	4.898	-1	-1	1
530	4.677	0	-1	2
492	4.655	1	1	2
826	4.53	0	1	2
624	4.081	-1	-1	2
1000	4.06	1	0	3
348	3.555	-1	1	0
363	3.289	1	2	0
273	3.183	1	1	4
431	3.031	1	-1	3
689	3.02	0	2	0
639	2.945	2	0	0
687	2.812	-1	-1	4
293	2.749	0	2	2
695	2.67	1	1	5
380	2.085	-1	-3	2
275	2.064	-3	-1	1