

1 **Revision 2**

2
3 **Thermodynamic study of monoclinic pyrrhotite in equilibrium with pyrite in the Ag-Fe-**
4 **S system by solid-state electrochemical cell technique**

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9
10 **Abstract**

11 An equilibrium mixture of monoclinic pyrrhotite and pyrite was synthesized in the
12 eutectic AlCl₃-KCl melt at 525K. The reaction $7\text{FeS}_2(\text{cr}) + 12\text{Ag}(\text{cr}) = 8\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}(\text{cr}) +$
13 $6\text{Ag}_2\text{S}(\text{cr})$ was studied by an electromotive force technique in an all-solid-state
14 electrochemical cell with an Ag⁺-conductive solid electrolyte in Ar at atmospheric pressure:
15 (-) Pt | Ag | AgI | Ag₂S, Fe_{0.875}S, FeS₂ | Pt (+). In the 490K – 565K temperature range a linear
16 electromotive force vs. temperature trend was obtained from which the temperature
17 dependence of the sulfur fugacity was determined for the monoclinic pyrrhotite - pyrite
18 equilibrium: $\log f_{\text{S}_2}(\text{mpo+py}) = 14.079 - 14406 \cdot T^{-1}$, (500 < T/K < 565). In addition, standard
19 thermodynamic functions were calculated for monoclinic pyrrhotite Fe_{0.875}S at 298K and
20 atmospheric pressure: $\Delta G_f(\text{mpo}, 298.15\text{K}) = -(136200 \pm 3000) \text{ J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$, $S^0(\text{mpo}, 298.15\text{K}) =$
21 $(66.7 \pm 1.3) \text{ J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1} \cdot \text{K}^{-1}$, $\Delta H_f(\text{mpo}, 298.15\text{K}) = -(157400 \pm 3000) \text{ J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$. Gaseous sulfur, S₂ –
22 ideal gas at 1 bar (10⁵ Pa) pressure was taken as a standard state for sulfur.

23
24 **Keywords:** monoclinic pyrrhotite, thermodynamic properties, sulfur fugacity, electrochemical
25 cell technique, salt flux technique

26 **Introduction**

27 In most ore deposits one or several forms of iron sulfides are usually present, and they
28 are often the prevailing ore components. The pyrrhotite (po) – pyrite (py) equilibrium and
29 pyrrhotite as a phase of variable composition are often used as a sulfur fugacity indicator
30 (Toulmin and Barton, 1964; Barton and Toulmin, 1966; Scott, 1976).

31 There are three stable sulfides in the Fe-S system in the 500-750K temperature
32 interval: stoichiometric pyrite FeS₂, anti-ferromagnetic hexagonal β-pyrrhotite (β-po), which
33 is stable below 598K, and paramagnetic hexagonal γ-pyrrhotite (γ-po), stable at temperatures
34 above 598K (Toulmin and Barton, 1964), or 601K (Osadchii and Chareev, 2006). The
35 transition of pyrrhotite from the β-phase into the γ-phase occurs at 598 ± 8K and is
36 accompanied by a change of the magnetic properties.

37 Low temperature phase relations in the Fe-S system were studied in several works.
38 According to Nakazawa and Morimoto (1971) in the region of β-po stability at least nine
39 pyrrhotite superstructures were isolated, but no data on their stability were reported. The most
40 well known naturally-occurring superstructure is Fe_{0.875}S (Fe₇S₈), monoclinic pyrrhotite
41 (mpo), occurring in equilibrium with pyrite. Taylor (1970) concluded that the peritectoid
42 transformation mpo ↔ po + py, occurring at 565K, is metastable, whereas according to Kissin
43 and Scott (1982), this transition is stable and occurs at 527K.

44 In nature, monoclinic pyrrhotite is found in equilibrium with pyrite or pyrrhotite
45 superstructures of various compositions including troilite. This observation suggests
46 instability of all pyrrhotite superstructures except for monoclinic pyrrhotite and troilite (Putnis
47 and McConnell, 1980).

48 In our previous study (Osadchii and Chareev, 2006) in the temperature range of 518-
49 723K only hexagonal pyrrhotite was stable in an assemblage with pyrite and argentite. On
50 cooling of the Ag-Fe-S system below 518 K a phase reaction β-po + arg → Ag + py occurs,

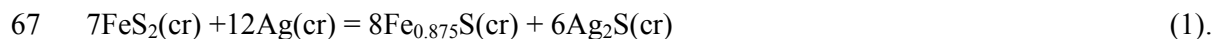
51 silver appears in the sample system, and the electromotive force (EMF) of the cell becomes
52 zero ($E=0$). At the same time the growth of threadlike silver crystals on the free surface of the
53 sample was observed. Further, increasing the temperature above 518K, leads to a new linear
54 $E(T)$ trend that is different from the previously obtained $E(T)$ dependence for the β -po+py
55 equilibrium (Chareev and Osadchii, 2005). Such trends had a smaller slope in $E-T$ coordinates
56 and always intersected with the β -po+py equilibrium line below the β - γ transition point in
57 hexagonal pyrrhotite (~ 574 K). The position of these trends depended on the given annealing
58 temperature (below 518 K) and the exposure time and was related to the formation of
59 metastable monoclinic pyrrhotite, differing from the equilibrium β -po by the higher sulfur
60 content. However no evidence of the presence of exactly monoclinic pyrrhotite in the sample
61 system was found.

62

63 **Theoretical background**

64

65 Equilibrium phase relations in the Ag-Fe-S system that include monoclinic pyrrhotite,
66 pyrite and argentite are described by the solid state reaction

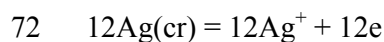


68 Reaction (1) can be implemented in an all-solid-state electrochemical cell

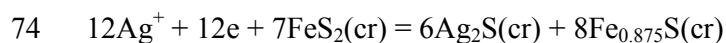


70 The cell can be represented as two half-cells:

71 *Left half-cell (reference system):*



73 *Right half-cell (sample system):*



75 and the overall potential forming process coincides with reaction (1).

76 The equilibrium EMF (E) of the electrochemical cell involving silver sulfide can vary
77 from zero when the sample system (on the right) contains metallic silver and sulfur fugacity
78 (f_{S_2}) corresponds to Ag-Ag₂S equilibrium, to its maximum value when the sample system
79 contains liquid sulfur.

80 EMF of the cell is related to the reaction free energy by the equation

$$81 \Delta G_r = -nFE \quad (2),$$

82 where ΔG_r (J·mol⁻¹) is the free energy change in the course of the reaction; $n=12$ is the
83 number of electrons participating in the electrochemical process; $F = 96485.309$ C·mol⁻¹ is the
84 Faraday constant; E is the EMF of the electrochemical cell in volts.

85 Therefore, knowing ΔG_r of the reaction (1), the Gibbs energy of silver sulfide and
86 pyrite, it is possible to find the temperature dependence of the Gibbs energy of monoclinic
87 pyrrhotite:

$$88 \Delta G_f(\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}, \text{cr}) = -3/2FE + 7/8\Delta G_f(\text{FeS}_2, \text{cr}) - 3/4\Delta G_f(\text{Ag}_2\text{S}, \text{cr}) \quad (3)$$

89 Using $\Delta G_f(\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}, \text{cr})$, calculated from the equation (3), and $\Delta G_f(\text{FeS}_2, \text{cr})$, taken
90 from the literature, one can calculate the sulfur fugacity for the mpo-py equilibrium



92 according to:

$$93 \log f_{S_2} = [7/8\Delta G_f(\text{FeS}_2, \text{cr}) - \Delta G_f(\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}, \text{cr})] / (3/8RT \ln 10) \quad (5)$$

94 where R is the gas constant, (8.314510 J·K⁻¹·mol⁻¹); T is the absolute temperature; and
95 gaseous sulfur ($\text{S}_{2,\text{gas}}$) is taken as the reference state for sulfur.

96 Substituting $\Delta G_f(\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}, \text{cr})$ from the equation (3) into equation (5) we get:

$$97 \log f_{S_2}(\text{mpo/py}) = [\Delta G_f(\text{Ag}_2\text{S}, \text{cr}) + 2FE] / 0.5RT \ln 10 \quad (6).$$

98 Thus, the sulfur fugacity for the mpo/py equilibrium can be obtained directly from measuring
99 EMF of the cell (A) using thermodynamic data for Ag₂S only.

100 Using additional data for temperature dependence of the free energy of formation of
101 argentite from silver and $S_2(g)$ from Richardson and Jeffes (1952)

$$102 \Delta G_f(\text{Ag}_2\text{S, cr}) = -87822 + 34.56 \cdot T, \text{ J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1} \quad (7),$$

103 we obtain the equation

$$104 \log f_{S_2} = (-9174.5 + 20.159 \cdot E/mV) \cdot T^{-1} + 3.61 \quad (8),$$

105 which in this temperature interval practically coincides with the newer data from Barin
106 (1995), Robie and Hemingway (1995), and applicable for studying any sulfide solid state
107 equilibria involving Ag_2S .

108 **Experimental**

109 The assemblage monoclinic pyrrhotite — pyrite was synthesized in silica-glass
110 ampoules containing an eutectic KCl-AlCl_3 melt (~66 atomic % AlCl_3) with a melting
111 temperature below 427 K (Moh and Taylor, 1971). Previously we used this eutectic mixture
112 for synthesis of $\text{FeSe}_{1-\delta}$ crystals at ~673K (Chareev et al, 2013). The synthesis temperature
113 and a batch composition were chosen according to the Fe-S phase diagram of Nakazawa and
114 Morimoto (1971).

115 Reagents used were carbonyl iron (Merck, 99.5%, 10 μm), crystalline sulfur (Johnson
116 Matthey, 99.9995%), KCl and anhydrous AlCl_3 (Fluka, 98%). The volume of salts was
117 approximately four times greater than that of sulfides. Silica-glass ampoules were heated to
118 523K – 528K, left for up to three months and were shaken occasionally to mix the batch. The
119 resulting iron sulfides were washed from the salt eutectic in distilled water, alcohol and
120 acetone in ultrasound bath.

121 The chemical composition of iron sulfides was studied with a digital scanning
122 electronic microscope TESCAN Vega II XMU with the energy dispersive micro analysis
123 system INCA Energy 450/XT (20 kV). The analysis showed that the approximate chemical

124 composition of the phases was close to $\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}$ and FeS_2 . No impurity elements (K, Al, Cl)
125 were found.

126 The obtained samples were studied using the X-ray powder diffractometry (DRON-7,
127 CoK_α radiation, Fe filter), Fig. 1, and were compared with JCPDS data. The composition of
128 the monoclinic pyrrhotite in the synthesized mpo+py assemblage was evaluated using the
129 method suggested by Yund and Hall (1969). For this purpose the initial mpo+py mixture in an
130 evacuated ampoule was placed into the furnace at 650K and left for 30 minutes and then was
131 quenched in cold water. During the heating vacancy disordering occurs in the iron sublattice
132 and monoclinic pyrrhotite transforms into hexagonal pyrrhotite. The composition of the
133 obtained hexagonal pyrrhotite (Fig1, inset) was determined from the (102) reflection using the
134 X-ray analytical dependence from Yund and Hall (1969). The DRON-7 diffractometer, the
135 CoK_α radiation, the Fe filter, a scanning step $\theta = 0.01^\circ$, and the external standard — silica,
136 were also used for that purpose.

137 The working electrode was prepared from the mixture of the synthesized iron sulfides
138 and Ag_2S (Aldrich Chem. Co., 99.9%) of the 1:1 mass ratio and the total weight of 400 mg,
139 which was pressed into a tablet of 6 mm diameter under the loading of 1-1.2 tons. The
140 reference electrode of metallic silver and the AgI solid electrolyte were also pressed into
141 tablets of 6 mm diameter and approximately of 3 mm thickness. The inert platinum electrodes
142 of 6 mm diameter were cut out from a sheet of 0.5 mm thickness.

143 The temperature dependence of EMF was obtained by the “temperature titration”
144 technique, i.e. waiting till the value of EMF becomes constant (equilibrium) at the given
145 temperature. The equilibrium was considered achieved when the value of EMF stayed
146 constant within the limits of ± 0.03 mV for several days. The EMF of the cell (A) was
147 measured in the temperature interval of 498K – 731K (Appendix). It took a rather long time
148 (up to 2-3 weeks) to achieve equilibrium EMF values in contrast to similar cells with

149 hexagonal pyrrhotite (Osadchii and Chareev, 2006), that were studied in the same temperature
150 interval.

151 There were no attempts to study EMF of the cell at temperatures definitely lower than
152 the temperature of stability of the po-py-Ag₂S association ($T \leq 500\text{K}$, $E=0$), as described in the
153 work of Chareev and Osadchii (2005), since there was always a possibility of an irreversible
154 decomposition or a composition change in the monoclinic pyrrhotite. The design of the cell
155 and the measurement technique were examined in detail in the works of Osadchii and
156 Chareev (2006) and Osadchii and Echmaeva (2007).

157

158 **Results and discussion**

159 Fig. 1 (inset) shows in coordinates relative intensity – 2θ the shape of the $(40\bar{8}, 22\bar{8},$
160 $228, 408)$ quadruplet of the synthesized monoclinic pyrrhotite and the shape of the (102) peak
161 of the hexagonal pyrrhotite, obtained by annealing of this monoclinic pyrrhotite. Also the
162 figure shows the theoretical positions of monoclinic pyrrhotite peaks according to
163 MINCRYST X-ray database (Chichagov et al, 1990). The synthesized monoclinic pyrrhotite
164 has the 2θ position which is less than that of monoclinic pyrrhotite according to Chichagov et
165 al. (1990), and should be richer in iron. In contrast, synthetic pyrrhotite transformed into a
166 hexagonal form, has the 2θ position which is larger than that of hexagonal Fe_{0.875}S pyrrhotite
167 and corresponds to the composition Fe_{0.865±0.004}S. Taking into account this contradiction,
168 practically stoichiometric compositions of natural monoclinic pyrrhotites, and an implausible
169 bend of the mpo-py solvus from Kissin and Scott (1982), it was assumed for subsequent
170 calculations that the synthesized pyrrhotite also has the Fe_{0.875}S composition (the Fe₇S₈
171 stoichiometry).

172 The high-temperature (above 565K) nonlinear part of the $E(T)$ trend likely
173 corresponds to non-equilibrium decomposition of monoclinic pyrrhotite. The low temperature

174 part (22 points, Appendix), corresponds to the monoclinic pyrrhotite – pyrite equilibrium and
175 is approximated by the linear equation ($\Delta_r C_p = 0$):

176 $E(\text{mpo+py}), \text{ mV} = -(260.1 \pm 4.1) + (0.5205 \pm 0.0080) \cdot T, (498 < T/\text{K} < 560) \quad R^2 = 0.9999 \quad (9)$

177 Experimental errors were determined by the least square method for the confidence
178 interval of 2σ .

179 Substituting Eq. (9) into Eq. (8) we obtain the equation of the temperature dependence
180 of the sulfur fugacity along the equilibrium monoclinic pyrrhotite - pyrite:

181 $\log f_{\text{S}_2}(\text{mpo+py}) = 14.079 - 14406 \cdot T^{-1} \quad (10)$

182 Then from equation (5), using the Gibbs free energy vs temperature data of Toulmin and
183 Barton (1964):

184 $\Delta G_f(\text{FeS}_2, \text{cr}) = -298236 + 196.98 \cdot T, (\text{J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}) \quad (11)$

185 and equation (10) for the sulfur fugacity, we obtain the temperature dependence of the Gibbs
186 energy of formation of monoclinic pyrrhotite from α -Fe and gaseous sulfur S_2 :

187 $\Delta G_f(\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}, \text{mpo}) = -157400 + 71.11 \cdot T \quad (12)$

188 The calculation of the sulfur fugacity for the mpo+py equilibrium definitely has a greater
189 accuracy than $\Delta_f G_{T(\text{mpo})}$, since the absolute value and the accuracy of f_{S_2} mostly depend on the
190 choice and the accuracy of thermodynamic data for Ag_2S , and switching to thermodynamic
191 properties of mpo requires the knowledge of the thermodynamic properties of pyrite and
192 monoclinic pyrrhotite and the composition of monoclinic pyrrhotite. Therefore, the
193 calculation of the thermodynamic properties of monoclinic pyrrhotite is given for comparison
194 only. It should be noted that the change in the composition of pyrrhotite from $\text{Fe}_{0.875}\text{S}$ to
195 $\text{Fe}_{0.865}\text{S}$ changes $\Delta G_f(\text{mpo}, 298.15\text{K})$ for only $400 \text{ J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$ which is much less than the
196 measurement errors ($3000 \text{ J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$).

197 Thermodynamic data obtained for monoclinic pyrrhotite as well as additional data
198 used are shown in Table 1. Fig 2 shows major equilibria discussed in this work in the $\log fS_2$ –
199 reciprocal temperature coordinates.

200 The analysis of Table 1 shows that the enthalpy of formation of mpo practically matches
201 the literature data (Robie and Hemingway, 1995; Xu and Navrotsky, 2010), while the entropy
202 on the contrary is noticeably higher. The curve of the sulfur fugacity calculated from the
203 literature data (Fig. 2), is at a small angle to the β -po+py dependence, and the extrapolation to
204 the intersection with the γ -po+py curve leads to confirmation of stability of monoclinic
205 pyrrhotite up to the highest temperatures. The mpo-py equilibrium we measured (Fig. 2, solid
206 circles) lies noticeably lower than predictions of literature thermodynamic data (dashed and
207 dotted lines) and has a slightly different temperature slope. Our data are also located at a
208 larger angle to the β -po+py equilibrium compared with the Robie and Hemingway (1995)
209 data. What is most important, at temperatures above ~565K one can see a slight deviation
210 from the low temperature linear trend for the mpo+py equilibrium (Fig. 2, open circles). This
211 behavior can be explained by a slow sulfur loss of monoclinic pyrrhotite due to the peritectoid
212 decomposition reaction of monoclinic pyrrhotite $Fe_7S_8 \rightarrow \beta-Fe_{1-x}S + FeS_2$, occurring in the
213 temperature interval of 550K – 600K. We expect that in the absence of kinetic constraints the
214 decomposition of mpo into β -po+py would occur at lower temperatures, as indicated by an
215 arrow in Fig. 2.

216

217 **Implications**

218 A rather small difference in the sulfur fugacity for the mpo – py equilibrium as compared
219 to that of the hexagonal β -po – py equilibrium confirms the possibility of coexistence of
220 various structures of pyrrhotite under the similar physicochemical conditions, which is often
221 observed in natural objects.

222

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290

291

292 **Table 1.** Thermodynamic properties of monoclinic pyrrhotite at 298.15 K and 1 bar pressure
 293 and auxiliary data. The standard state for sulfur - ideal S₂ gas at $p = 1$ bar

Phase	$\Delta_f G^\circ$ J·mol ⁻¹	$\Delta_f H^\circ$ J·mol ⁻¹	S ^o J·mol ⁻¹ ·K ⁻¹	References
Fe(cr)	0	0	27.09 ± 0.13	(Robie, Hemingway, 1995)
S ₂ (g)	0	0	228.17 ± 0.02	(Robie, Hemingway, 1995)
S(cr)	-39726 ± 335	-64245 ± 250	15.511 ± 0.05	(Robie, Hemingway, 1995)
FeS ₂ (pyrite)	-239800 ± 1700	-300100 ± 1700	52.9 ± 0.1	(Robie, Hemingway, 1995)
FeS ₂ (pyrite)	-239500 ± 2100	-298240 ± 2100	58.3 ± 0.2	(Toulmin, Barton, 1964)
Fe _{0.875} S(mpo)	-138800 ± 2000	-161800 ± 2000	60.79 ± 0.21	(Robie, Hemingway, 1995)
Fe _{0.875} S(β-po)		-158650 ± 3000		(Xu, Navrotsky, 2010)
Fe _{0.875} S (mpo)*	-140100 ± 3000	-166500 ± 3000	49.2 ± 0.3	(Chareev, Osadchii, 2005)
Fe _{0.875} S(mpo)	-136200 ± 3000	-157400 ± 3000	66.7 ± 1.3	present study

294 * the mpo composition and structure has not been proved

295

296

297 **Figure captions**

298

299 **Fig. 1.** X-ray diagram of the monoclinic pyrrhotite (mpo) – pyrite (py) assemblage. In the
300 inset: monoclinic pyrrhotite ($40\bar{8}$, $22\bar{8}$, 228, 408) quadruplet (this study and Chichagov et al,
301 1990) and (102) peak of hexagonal pyrrhotite (β -po) formed after annealing of monoclinic
302 pyrrhotite.

303

304 **Fig. 2.** Sulfur fugacity vs reciprocal temperature in the Ag-Fe-S system. Solid circles are the
305 sulfur fugacity measured for the monoclinic pyrrhotite - pyrite equilibrium. Open circles are
306 experimental points not included in calculation due to the mpo decomposition (See
307 Appendix). Also the plot shows fugacity dependences for β -po+py and γ -po+py equilibria
308 (Osadchii, Chareev, 2006); $\text{Ag}_2\text{S}(\text{arg})+\text{Ag}$ (Richardson, Jeffes, 1952), and the monoclinic
309 pyrrhotite -pyrite equilibrium calculated using data from (Robie, Hemingway, 1995) for mpo
310 and data from (Toulmin, Barton, 1964) for py, and calculated using data from (Robie,
311 Hemingway, 1995) for both pyrite and monoclinic pyrrhotite; the sulfur condensation curve
312 $\text{S}(\text{l})/\text{S}_2(\text{gas})$ using data from Barin (1995) (the upper left corner).

313

314

315

316 **APPENDIX**

317 Measured temperatures and EMF (mV) of the electrochemical cell and deviations
318 between the experimental points and Eqn. (9)

T (K)	E_{meas} (mV)	$E_{\text{meas}} - E_{\text{calc}}$
498.4*	0.71	1.43
500.3	0.12	-0.15
500.5	0.47	0.1
501.3	0.78	-0.01
501.6	0.96	0.05
504.2	2.55	0.26
504.3	2.21	-0.11
505.4	2.95	0.04
506.1	2.92	-0.37
509.7	5.02	-0.12
510.2	5.48	0.06
511.4	5.6	-0.42
513.3	6.91	-0.09
515.9	8.45	0.05
516.1	8.28	-0.2
517.7	9.19	-0.14
517.9	10.16	0.72
519.8	10.55	0.14
522.6	12.05	0.21
523.7	12.7	0.26
531.3	16.4	-0.01

541.6	21.71	-0.05
551.7	26.75	-0.23
561.6*	31.66	-0.52
572.0*	36.37	-1.22
587.2*	43.8	-1.66
597.4*	49.43	-1.36
607.9*	55.14	-1.1
617.9*	60.92	-0.53
628.2*	66.44	-0.4
638.6*	72.23	-0.01
648.7*	77.65	0.17
658.9*	83.80	0.98
669.4*	89.98	1.72
679.6*	95.81	2.26
690.3*	101.59	2.43
696.1*	104.90	2.76
700.7*	107.85	3.29
706.1*	110.74	3.36
710.8*	113.76	3.92
716.2*	116.67	4.04
721.0*	119.84	4.74
731.1*	125.8	5.44

319 (*) points are excluded from calculations but shown in Fig. 2.

320

