Direct evidence for intrinsically broken $8-N$ coordination rule in melt-quenched glasses by a novel method

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The sign of the electric field gradient at $^{129}$I atoms formed from nuclear decay of $^{129m}$Te parent atoms undergoes a change from positive to negative when the parent-atom coordination changes from 2 to 3. This provides a sensitive way to discriminate twofold from threefold Te sites in glasses by use of $^{129}$I Mössbauer emission spectroscopy. Evidence for some threefold Te sites in As$_x$Te$_{1-x}$ glasses is presented indicating the first clear breakdown of $8-N$ coordination rule intrinsic to a glass network.

The starting point for modeling atomic networks of the good glass formers Ge$_x$X$_{1-x}$ and As$_x$X$_{1-x}$, where X = S, Se, and Te, has been the assumption that the $8-N$ coordination rule of valence is locally satisfied. This rule specifies that the chalcogen (X), As, and Ge atoms are, respectively, twofold, threefold, and fourfold coordinated. A breakdown in this rule, for impurity atoms incorporated in network glasses, first emerged when successful doping of amorphous SiH$_x$ by As dopant was demonstrated. In this work we provide direct microscopic evidence for a breakdown of this rule intrinsic to the host network of melt quenched As$_x$Te$_{1-x}$ glasses. This evidence has been obtained by a novel method—$^{129}$I Mössbauer emission spectroscopy$^4$—which provides a simpler and more precise alternative to diffraction methods$^4$ to probe the chalcogen coordination in glasses.

The success of the present method rests on the experimental fact that the coordination number of $^{129m}$Te atoms directly determines the sign of the electric field gradient ($eV_{zz}$) at the $^{129}$I daughter atoms which are formed as a consequence of nuclear transmutation. When $^{129m}$Te atoms are twofold coordinated ($\pi$ bonded) as in the elemental chalcogens [see Fig. 1(a)], a bond rearrangement$^1$ accompanies the Te$\rightarrow$I transformation; one of the Te $\pi$ bonds breaks while the other $\pi$ bond transforms into a $\sigma$ bond leaving the $^{129}$I daughter nominally onefold coordinated. In such a configuration experiences a positive$^4$ $eV_{zz}$. On the other hand, when $^{129m}$Te atoms are threefold coordinated ($\pi$ bonded), there is overwhelming evidence$^4$ that the $^{129}$I daughter continues to be threefold or twofold coordinated ($\pi$ bonded) and experiences a negative$^4$ $eV_{zz}$ [see Fig. 1(b)]. Thus the sign of $eV_{zz}$, which is directly accessible from $^{129}$I Mössbauer emission spectra provides an elegant way to discriminate twofold from threefold coordinated Te sites.

High quality As$_x$Te$_{1-x}$ bulk glasses of compositions $x = 0.30$ and 0.50 were prepared as described in Ref. 7, and characterized by x-ray diffraction, electron microscopy, differential scanning calorimetry, and $^{129}$Te Mössbauer absorption spectroscopy. Detailed analysis of these data, to be published elsewhere, indicates that the melt-quenched samples were homogenous glasses. The composition of the glasses was verified independently by crystallizing and identifying the amounts of the two crystalline phases (c-Te, c-As$_x$Te$_y$) formed. In the present experiments, $^{129m}$Te doping of the As$_x$Te$_{1-x}$ glasses was carried out by incorporating traces of neutron activated $^{129}$Te metal$^5$ in the melts. Figure 2 shows some of the spectra obtained.

The principal result to emerge from these spectra is that there are two types of chemically inequivalent $^{129}$I sites. This is seen in Fig. 2 where a qualitative improvement in the fit to the spectra of the As$_{30}$Te$_{70}$ glass results in going from a one-site to a two-site fit. Nuclear-quadrupole-interaction (NQI) parameters (isomer-shift $\delta$, quadrupole coupling $e^2Q_{zz}$) of the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics{fig1}
\caption{Bonding configuration of $^{129}$I daughter atoms formed from (a) twofold Te atoms and (b) threefold Te atoms. The filled circle and asterisk designate lone pair and antibonding electron states. Our usage of $\pi$ and $\sigma$ bonds here differs from the usual chemical language in that these are defined in the principal axes of the EFG tensor of Te or I. The sign of the $eV_{zz}$ on the right is derived in Ref. 5.}
\end{figure}
two sites, which are henceforth labeled A (high \(e^2QV_{\alpha}\)) and B (low \(e^2QV_{\alpha}\)), were obtained by standard spectral analysis\(^2\) and are summarized in Table I. We believe that these sites are the result of having two distinct \(^{129m}\)Te sites in the glass network and that these are not formed\(^4\) because of bond breaking caused by nuclear recoil in the transmutation \(^{129m}\)Te \(\rightarrow\) \(^{129}\)Te. In contrast to the behavior of the present glasses, \(^{129m}\)Te incorporated in plastic S or amorphous Se leads\(^3\) to a single \(^{129}\)I site (see Fig. 2).

In \(^{129}\)I spectroscopy, a correlation of isomer shift (\(\delta\)) with quadrupole coupling \(e^2QV_{\alpha}\) has been noted previously\(^5\) (see Fig. 3) and this correlation provides a convenient way to identify the chemical nature of the sites A and B. On such a plot, nearly all available data lies in the region bounded by the \(\pi\) and \(\sigma\) line; these lines represent the two extreme cases of I bonding. On this plot we immediately recognize that site A, seen in both As\(_{50}\)Te\(_{70}\) glass and As\(_{50}\)Te\(_{50}\) glass, is closely related to the I site seen\(^10\) in As\(_{51}\) and As\(_{51}\)–S\(_{3}\) crystals. These NQI data unambiguously show that site A represents an I–As \(\sigma\) bond that comes from a parent Te site that was twofold coordinated to As. In Fig. 3, the small systematic shift away from the \(\sigma\) line of the data point of As\(_{51}\) and of site A is the result of increasing amounts of I bonding (\(\pi\) character) to a more distant second As neighbor and is a point which has been discussed earlier.\(^3\)

Thus site A, which is the dominant site in the spectra of the glasses, is also the site which conforms to the \(8 - N\) rule of Te coordination.

The more profound result to emerge from the spectra is the existence of site B in the glasses which is characterized by a positive \(e^2QV_{\alpha}\). We arrive at the sign of \(e^2QV_{\alpha}\) as follows. For As\(_{50}\)Te\(_{70}\) glass, we recognize that when a negative sign is chosen for \(e^2QV_{\alpha}\), the \(\delta\) of the B site is anomalous; i.e., it is low and it lies below the \(\sigma\) line in the plot of Fig. 3. This is unexpected. Interestingly, if a positive sign is chosen for \(e^2QV_{\alpha}\), then the plot reveals that not only does the \(\delta\) of site B appear physically plausible, but in

\[
\text{FIG. 2. Mössbauer spectra of } ^{129m}\text{Te sources in indicated hosts taken at 4.2 K using a Na}^{129}\text{I absorber. Note the qualitative improvement in the fit to the spectra of } ^{\text{g-As}_{50}\text{Te}_{70}} \text{in going from a one-site to a two-site fit. The fits further reveal that the second site (site B) reduces in relative intensity as the As content of the glass increases.}
\]

\[
\text{TABLE I. } ^{129}\text{I quadrupole coupling } (e^2Q V_{\alpha}), \text{ asymmetry parameter } \eta = |(V_{\alpha} - V_{\pi})/V_{\alpha}|, \text{ and isomer-shift } (\delta) \text{ in indicated hosts. The NQI parameters of sites seen in the glasses differ qualitatively from the ones known in the crystals.}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>(e^2Q V_{\alpha}) (MHz)</th>
<th>(\eta)</th>
<th>(\delta) (mm/s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As(<em>{50})Te(</em>{70})</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>-868(4)</td>
<td>0.22(1)</td>
<td>1.13(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>+363(9)</td>
<td>0.10(^a)</td>
<td>1.13(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As(<em>{50})Te(</em>{50})</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>-889(3)</td>
<td>0.21(1)</td>
<td>1.13(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>+387(13)</td>
<td>0.10(^a)</td>
<td>1.22(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c-As(<em>{5})Te(</em>{3})</td>
<td></td>
<td>+186(4)</td>
<td>0.21(9)</td>
<td>1.14(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c-Te</td>
<td></td>
<td>-397(2)</td>
<td>0.70(1)</td>
<td>1.16(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Quoted relative to Na\(^{129}\)I.  
\(^b\)Parameter kept fixed in fit.
FIG. 3. Correlation of $^{129}$I isomer shift ($\delta - \delta_0$) with quadrupole coupling $e^2QV_{zz}$ (see Ref. 9). Site A is related to the I site in As$_4$I$_3$ (see text). For site B, note that the $\delta$ for As$_{50}$Te$_{70}$ glass lies below the $\sigma$ line when a negative sign is chosen for $e^2QV_{zz}$ (open circle). When a positive sign is chosen for $e^2QV_{zz}$ (filled circles) at site B, the nature of this site seen in As$_{50}$Te$_{70}$ glass and As$_{50}$Te$_{70}$ glass becomes the same.

In fact, the nature of site B seen in As$_{50}$Te$_{70}$ glass and the one seen in As$_{50}$Te$_{70}$ glass actually become the same. The effect of increasing the As content of the glass in the composition range $0.30 \leq x \leq 0.50$ then has a fairly simple interpretation; it merely consists of decreasing the site intensity ratio $I_B/I_A$ (see Fig. 2 and Table I) and this is a point we discuss later. The positive sign of $e^2QV_{zz}$ at site B is reminiscent of the positive sign of $e^2QV_{zz}$ observed in the threefold coordinated Te compounds c-As$_2$Te$_3$ (Table I) and Te tetrahalides. By analogy we conclude that site B must also represent a threefold Te site, i.e., the $8-N$ rule of Te coordination must be intrinsically broken in As$_x$Te$_{1-x}$ glasses.

Cornet and Rossier$^{11,12}$ were the first to propose the existence of threefold Te sites in As$_x$Te$_{1-x}$ glasses on the basis of their diffraction results. In their electron RDF's, the area of the first neighbor peak containing contributions from As-As, As-Te, and Te-Te pairs showed a systematic reduction as a function of $x$, and this was taken as evidence of a reduced fraction of threefold Te sites. In the Te-rich phase ($x < 0.40$), where presumably some Te-Te bonds occur, these authors suggested$^{11}$ that the threefold sites are stabilized by a rotation of a given As$_x$Te$_{3/2}$ pyramidal unit about an As$_1$-Te$_2$ bond as shown in Fig. 4. This leads to a more efficiently packed network (of As$_2$Te$_4$ stoichiometry) in which for each threefold Te site, two twofold ones occur, and this is in reasonable agreement with the observed site intensity ratio $I_B/I_A = \text{Te}(\text{threefold})/\text{Te}(\text{twofold}) = 1.28(4)$ for a As$_{50}$Te$_{70}$ glass. In the As-rich phase ($x > 0.40$), these authors further pointed out that some As-As bonds must occur, which, owing to their small length, hinder free rotation of the As$_{3/2}$ units and the formation of threefold Te sites. The reduced value of the site intensity ratio $I_B/I_A$ for (threefold)/Te(twofold) = 1.28(4) found for the As$_{50}$Te$_{70}$ glass is again in general accord with this idea.

The crystal structure$^{13}$ of As$_2$Te$_3$ is unique in that it has only threefold Te sites and an equal number of both threefold and sixfold As sites. The observation of threefold Te sites in the corresponding As$_{40}$Te$_{60}$ glass, which is 89% as dense as the crystal,$^{11}$ we believe has an origin in the presence of van der Waals interactions.$^{14}$ These interactions mediated by lone pairs in these glasses apparently overwhelm the local twofold bonding requirements of Te and lead to a more efficiently packed network with some threefold Te. These results confirm Phillips's conjecture$^{14}$ that the weak glass-forming tendency of Te (compared to S or Se) is a consequence of its failure to satisfy the coordination constraint of the $8-N$ rule. The As sites in these glasses are threefold coordinated as shown by extended x-ray absorption fine structure.

In conclusion, by use of a novel method, we have demonstrated that both twofold and threefold Te sites occur in As$_x$Te$_{1-x}$ network glasses. This result is shown to be in harmony with the existing diffraction data, density measurements, and understandings of the glass-forming ability of this binary. The present method is likely to provide important clues in understanding the structure, since it is the chalcogen site that appears to display a variety of unique bonding configurations in these technologically important materials.

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5. The sign of the EFG in the valence glasses is determined by the population of 5p orbitals of I, since

\[ \langle \rho_{p_z} | eV_{zz} | \rho_{p_z} \rangle = -\frac{1}{2} \langle \rho_{p_z} | eV_{zz} | \rho_{p_z} \rangle = 2e/5 \langle r^3 \rangle . \]

For one bond I, such as in a I2 dimer, the EFG is because of \( \sigma \) bonding of a \( \rho_z \) hole. This gives a positive \( eV_{zz} = 4e/5 \langle r^3 \rangle \) and a negative \( e^2QV_{zz} \) since the \( ^{125}I \) nuclear moment \( eQ = -0.55 \text{ b} \). For site B, we conjecture that I is twofold coordinated [see Fig. 1(b)] as in BiI3 (see Ref.

10. This requires two electrons to be in a bonding \( \rho_z \) and a nonbonding \( \rho_z \) and another electron in antibonding \( \rho_x \) or \( \rho_y \). This results in a negative \( eV_{zz} = -2e/5 \langle r^3 \rangle \) and a positive \( e^2QV_{zz} \).


