on the Phases Cr2As, Fe2As, Co2As, and Rh2As

ARNE KJEKSHUS and
KJELL ERIK SKAUG

Kjemisk Institutt, Universitetet i Oslo,
Blindern, Oslo 3, Norway

Despite numerous studies on the metal rich pnictides and chalcogenides of the transition elements there is a general lack of detailed information concerning their chemical and physical properties. The present paper concerns the composition, range of homogeneity, and magnetic properties for the phases Cr2As, Fe2As, Co2As, and Rh2As (cf. Refs. 1-22).

Experimental. Samples were prepared from 99.999+ % As (Johnson, Matthey & Co.), 99.99 % Cr (Koch-Light Lab.), 99.9+ % Fe (Riedel-DeHaen AC.), 99.7 % Co (Baker Chemical Co.), and 99.99+ % Rh (Johnson, Matthey & Co.) by heating weighed quantities of the components in evacuated, sealed silica tubes at temperatures between 400 and 900°C for 4 days. (The iron and cobalt powders were obtained by hydrogen reduction (600°C) of their oxides.) The sintered powders were ground and reannealed at temperatures between 500 and 900°C for 4-15 day periods and, finally, quenched in iced water.

X-Ray powder photographs of all samples were taken in a Guinier type camera of 80 mm diameter with monochromatized CuKα-radiation using KCl as internal standard. The lattice dimensions were refined by applying the method of least squares to the diffraction data and the indicated error limits correspond to the standard deviations.

Magnetic susceptibilities were measured between 80 and 1000 K by the Faraday method (maximum field ~8 kOe) using 10-100 mg samples.

Results. The compositions of the Cr2As, Fe2As, Co2As, and Rh2As phases, which have no appreciable ranges of homogeneity, were determined by applying the disappearing phase principle to Guinier photographs of samples with different nominal compositions. The results showed the phases to be stoichiometric according to the general formula $T^x X^{1-x}$ ($T$ = Cr, Fe, Co, Rh, $X$ = As, Sb, Bi). The unit cell dimensions listed in Table 1, are reasonably consistent with those reported in the literature.4,7,11,15,16,17,22

The magnetic properties of Cr2As and Fe2As are well established through earlier magnetic susceptibility, magnetization, and neutron diffraction studies.6,12,14,16-18 The thermomagnetic data for Cr2As and Fe2As obtained during the present investigation are consistent with the previous studies, and are accordingly not included here. No magnetic studies have hitherto been reported for Co2As and Rh2As.

The temperature dependence of the reciprocal magnetic susceptibility for Co2As is shown in Fig. 1. The experimental data refer to a single sample, but measurements

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Table 1. Unit cell dimensions (at room temperature) for Cr₂As, Fe₂As, Co₂As, and Rh₂As.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>a (Å)</th>
<th>b (Å)</th>
<th>c (Å)</th>
<th>c/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cr₂As</td>
<td>3.618(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.350(1)</td>
<td>1.7551(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fe₂As</td>
<td>3.632(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.981(1)</td>
<td>1.6468(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co₂As</td>
<td>3.990(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.581(2)</td>
<td>0.978(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α-Rh₂As</td>
<td>5.8755(3)</td>
<td>3.917(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β-Rh₂As</td>
<td>5.910(2)</td>
<td>3.917(1)</td>
<td>7.367(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Reciprocal of the magnetic susceptibility of α- and β-Co₂As as function of increasing (▲) and decreasing (●) temperature.

Fig. 2. Reciprocal of the magnetic susceptibility of α- and β-Rh₂As as function of increasing (▲) and decreasing (●) temperature. The analytical expressions for $\chi(T)$ are:

- α-Rh₂As: $\chi \times 10^6 = -0.348 + 0.000101T$; 90 K < T < 880 K.
- β-Rh₂As: $\chi \times 10^6 = 0.1285 + 0.000010T$; 90 K < T < ~ 600 K and T > 880 K.

Repeated on other samples confirm the reproducibility of the curve. Above ~ 60 K, Co₂As is in a paramagnetic state, and the $\chi^{-1}(T)$-curve satisfies the Curie-Weiss Law ($\chi^{-1} = C^{-1}(T - \theta)$) for T > ~ 300 K. At 725 ± 5 K there is a hysteresis-less discontinuity in $\chi^{-1}(T)$. Although Heyding and Calvert report that Co₂As exists in

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two modifications, they did not establish the transition temperature properly. They give \(490 \pm 50^\circ\text{C}\) as the range for the transition on heating and \(388 \pm 40^\circ\text{C}\) on cooling, implying that the phase change is associated with an appreciable hysteresis. Neither of these temperature intervals coincide with the discontinuity in the \(\chi^{-1}(T)\)-curve which defines \(725 \pm 5\) K as the transformation temperature for \(\alpha\)-CoAs. (The temperature of the \(\alpha\)-CoAs is independent on whether the measurements are performed by heating or cooling the samples.) The reversible nature of the transition is consistent with a close similarity in atomic arrangement of the two modifications as proposed by Heyding and Calvert.\(^7\) Support for this suggestion is provided by the inability to obtain high enough quenching rates to isolate even trace amounts of \(\beta\)-CoAs at room temperature.

The slope of the \(\chi^{-1}(T)\)-curve yields a paramagnetic moment \(\mu_p = 2.28 \pm 0.06\) B.M./Co-atom for \(\alpha\)-CoAs and \(\mu_p = 2.24 \pm 0.06\) B.M./Co-atom for \(\beta\)-CoAs. This corresponds to the spin quantum number \(S_{\alpha} = 1.47 \pm 0.05\) and \(S_{\beta} = 1.45 \pm 0.05\) for \(\alpha\)- and \(\beta\)-CoAs, respectively, according to the "spin-only" approximation \(\mu = 2\sqrt{S(S+1)}\). Hence, within the experimental error, the two modifications have the same number of unpaired electrons per metal atom. Extrapolation of the linear sections to \(\chi^{-1} = 0\) gives \(\theta\)-values of \(-680 \pm 50\) and \(-430 \pm 50\) K for \(\alpha\)- and \(\beta\)-CoAs, respectively. The shape of the \(\chi^{-1}(T)\)-curve resembles a parabola below \(~300\) K, strongly suggesting a paramagnetic to ferrimagnetic transition at \(\sim 60\) K. This implies that the magnetic ordering in CoAs cannot be of the simple antiferromagnetic type as found in CrAs and FeAs\(^{5,10,11,14,18}\) A low temperature neutron diffraction study of CoAs is in progress.

Magnetic susceptibility measurements of Rh\(_2\)As were made on samples slowly cooled or quenched from \(900^\circ\text{C}\). The results (Fig. 2) exhibit excellent reproducibility and consistency between the two kinds of heat treated samples. The quenched samples contain the high temperature modification, \(\beta\)-Rh\(_2\)As, as the single phase which is seen to exhibit a nearly temperature independent paramagnetism. Fig. 2 demonstrates that \(\beta\)-Rh\(_2\)As can be maintained in a metastable state below \(~600\) K. At this temperature the atomic mobilities become large enough to facilitate the transition from \(\beta\)- to \(\alpha\)-Rh\(_2\)As. The magnetic susceptibility of \(\alpha\)-Rh\(_2\)As remains negative (viz. diamagnetism) after a further slow temperature cycling and has an approximately constant value below \(880 \pm 10\) K. Similar results were obtained for \(\alpha\)-Rh\(_2\)As from the slowly cooled samples.

On the basis of Fig. 2, the reversible transition between the two modifications of Rh\(_2\)As occurs at \(880 \pm 10\) K. Quesnel and Heyding\(^{18}\) give \(650 \pm 700^\circ\text{C}\) as the transformation temperature.

1. Friedrich, K. Metallurgie 5 (1908) 150.

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