

PHONONIC AND ELASTIC PROPERTIES OF TlInTe_2 AND TlGaTe_2 CRYSTALS: EXPERIMENT AND FIRST-PRINCIPLES CALCULATIONS

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The phonon properties of TlInTe_2 and TlGaTe_2 crystals were studied experimentally by Raman scattering and theoretically from first principles using density functional theory (DFT). Raman scattering studies were used to determine the frequencies of Raman-active optical modes. Phonon mode dispersion, the origin of energy states, the projected partial densities of states (PDOS) onto atoms, and optical phonon frequencies were calculated from first principles. Six elastic constants (C_{11} , C_{12} , C_{13} , C_{33} , C_{44} , and C_{66}) of the TlInTe_2 and TlGaTe_2 crystal compounds were also calculated, and the bulk modulus, shear moduli, Young's moduli, and Poisson's ratio were determined.

Keywords: Raman scattering, optical phonons, first principles, phonon dispersion, elastic constants, elastic modules, Poisson's ratio.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Semiconductor compounds TlInTe_2 and TlGaTe_2 belong to the group of compounds with the structure of the TlSe type and are characterized by a centrosymmetric tetragonal structure with the space group of symmetry ($I4/mcm$) [1, 2]. In these compounds, trivalent ions of a metal M (In^{3+} or Ga^{3+}) are tetragonally surrounded by Te^{2-} ions, and monovalent Tl^+ ions are surrounded by eight Te^{2-} ions (Fig. 1). Thus, long negatively charged chains are formed that are stretched along the crystallographic axis. Fragments of various chains are bound by monovalent Tl^+ ions located between them. There is covalent bonding inside the chains, and the chains themselves are bound with each other by weaker ionic bonds. It is this anisotropy that leads to assigning compounds with the TlSe type structure to one-dimensional (1D) materials. The structure of the compounds like TlGaTe_2 is stable against high hydrostatic pressure [3–5]. For example, TlInTe_2 does

not suffer structural PTs at the pressure of at least up to 33.5 GPa while undergoing a semiconductor–semimetal transition at 4 GPa with a subsequent transition to the superconducting state at 5.7 GPa ($T_c = 3.8$ K) [3].

Recently, the TlInTe_2 and TlGaTe_2 compounds and their structural analogues have been extensively studied, since, in addition to their promising applications in optoelectronics and photovoltaics [6, 7], they were found to exhibit, at room temperature, local deformation of the crystal surface relief under laser were found to exhibit, at room temperature, local deformation of the crystal surface relief under laser irradiation [8], low lattice heat conductivity (~ 0.5 W/mK) [9–12], and specific electroconductivity features [13]. In structural analogues of these compounds— TlInSe_2 crystals—a high Seebeck coefficient (107 mK/K) is observed, which correlates with the formation of an incommensurate superlattice in them [14].

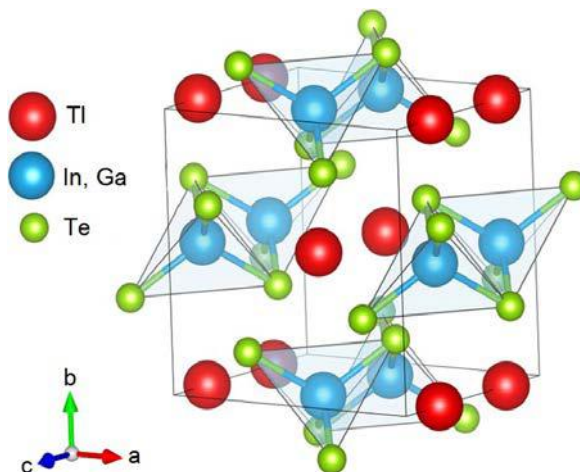


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of the tetragonal crystal structure of TlMTe_2 compounds ($M=\text{In, Ga}$).

In this article, we present the results of an experimental and theoretical study from first principles of Raman spectra and elastic properties of TlGaTe₂ and TlInTe₂ crystals.

2. EXPERIMENTAL AND CALCULATION METHODS

TlGaTe₂ and TlInTe₂ compounds were synthesized by direct single-temperature synthesis from elements with a purity of at least 99.999% in Stepanov quartz vessels evacuated to 10⁻² Pa. Single crystals of the studied compounds were obtained by directional crystallization.

The resulting crystals were characterized by X-ray diffraction and Raman scattering.

X-ray diffraction studies of the obtained samples were performed on a “D2 Phaser” X-ray diffractometer using CuK_α radiation at T = 300 K. Phase analyses were performed by the Rietveld method using standard EVA and TOPAS-4.2 programs (Bruker, Germany). The lattice parameters of the studied crystals were determined with an accuracy of ±0.001 Å. The details of the X-ray diffraction studies have been described in detail in our previous works [15-17].

The Raman scattering study in TlGaTe₂ and TlInTe₂ crystals was carried out at a temperature of T = 300 K on samples with a mirror surface, in backscattering geometry, using a “Nanofinder 30” confocal Raman microspectrometer (Tokyo Instr., Japan). YAG:Nd laser with a second harmonic wavelength of λ = 532 nm was used as the excitation light source. The diffraction grating of 1800 lines/mm was used in the spectrometer measurements, with which the accuracy of determining the spectral line positions was no worse than 0.5 cm⁻¹. The experimental technique used to study the Raman spectra is described in detail in [18–23]. Ab-initio calculations of the lattice dynamics were performed using density functional perturbation theory (DFPT) [24–26] using the plane-wave pseudopotential method

implemented in the ABINIT code [27]. In this work, norm-preserving Hartwigsen-Goedecker-Hutter pseudopotentials were used [28]. The exchange-correlation interaction was described in the generalized gradient approximation (GGA) [29].

Plane waves with energies up to 80 Ry were taken into account in the expansion of the wave functions, ensuring good convergence of the total energy. Summations over the BZ were performed on a 4×4×4 Monkhorst-Pack grid [30]. The lattice parameters and equilibrium positions of atoms in the unit cell were determined by minimizing the Hellman-Feynman forces. Equilibrium positions of atoms in the unit cell were found using the Broyden-Fletcher-Goldfarb-Shanno (BFGS) method, using experimental data as initial values. The minimization process was continued until the force moduli were less than 10⁻⁸ Ry/Bohr. A 40×40×40 grid of points in the BZ was used to calculate the phonon density of states. To obtain the LO-TO splitting at the center of the BZ for polar modes, the long-range Coulomb field was taken into account, and a nonanalytical term, which depends on the Born effective charge tensors and the electron permittivity, was added to the dynamic matrix. The dependence of the convergence of the total energy and Hellman-Feynman forces on the Monkhorst-Pack grid and on the maximum energy of plane waves, taking into account the optimal computer time used for calculations, showed that the 4×4×4 grid and the maximum energy of plane waves of 80 Ry in the expansion of wave functions give fairly good results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Optical Phonons in TlGaTe₂ and TlInTe₂ Crystals

The unit cell of TlGaTe₂ and TlInTe₂ contains two formula units, i.e., there are 8 atoms. Accordingly, the vibrational spectrum consists of 24 lattice modes and is described by the following irreducible representations at the center of the Brillouin zone [31]:

$$\Gamma = A_{1g}^1 + 2A_{2g} + 3A_{2u} + B_{1g} + B_{1u} + 2B_{2g} + 3E_g + 4E_u \quad (1)$$

Of these, three modes are acoustic, the A_{2u} and E_u modes are IR-active, the E_g, B_{2g}, A_{1g}, and B_{1g} modes are Raman (R)-active, and the B_{1u} and A_{2g} modes are so-called silent modes. The E modes are doubly degenerate.

The Raman spectra of TlGaTe₂ and TlInTe₂ are shown in Figure 2. The frequencies of the Raman-active modes that we recorded are in good agreement with the experimental results [31, 32, 33]. Table 1 lists the frequencies of the Raman-active modes in TlGaTe₂ and TlInTe₂ crystals recorded in this work. For comparison, the table also lists the frequencies of these modes determined experimentally in [31, 32, 33], as well as those calculated theoretically in [6, 9, 32] and in this work (Section 1).

As can be seen from Fig. 3a, the dispersion of optical phonons in all symmetric directions, except for

the PN line, is insignificant, indicating weak interatomic interaction in these directions. In addition, the presence of lighter Ga atoms shifts the phonon spectra of the TlGaTe₂ compound towards higher frequencies (>200 cm⁻¹). From the partial phonon densities of states of the TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals shown in Fig. 3b, it is evident that the main contribution at low frequencies is made by the heaviest atoms (marked Tl in red), at medium frequencies by Te atoms (blue), and at high frequencies by In and Ga atoms (green). Analysis of the calculation results (Fig. 3b) indicates that the substitution of gallium atoms for indium atoms in TlGa_xIn_{1-x}Te₂ should experimentally manifest itself in behavior with a change in the composition of the ²E_g and ³E_g modes.

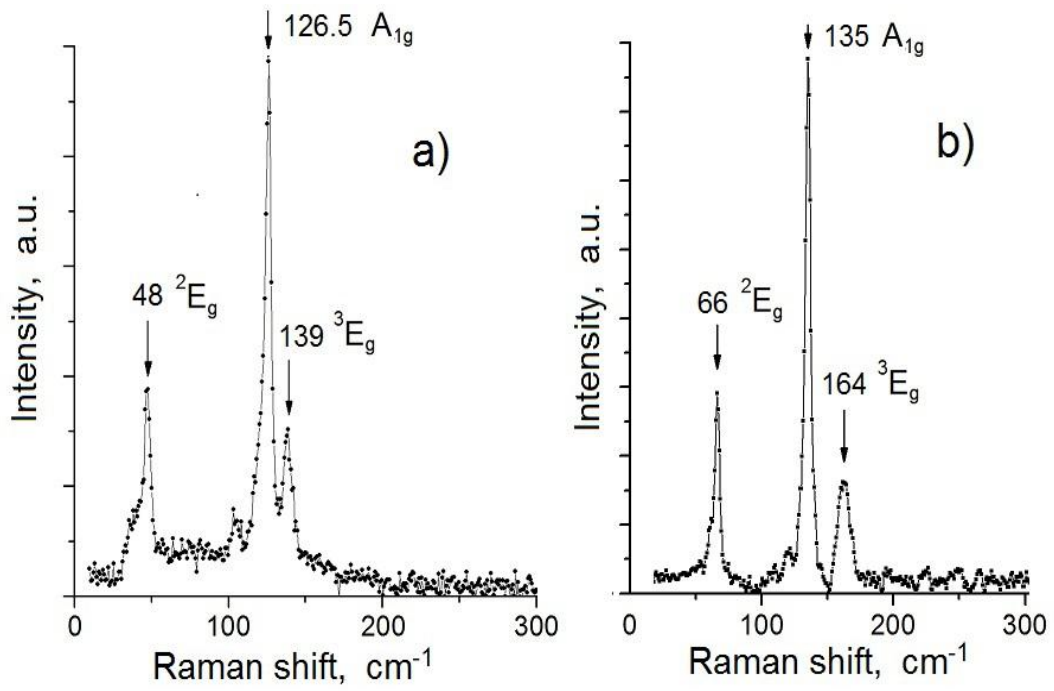


Fig. 2. Raman spectra of TlInTe₂ (a) and TlGaTe₂ (b) single crystals.

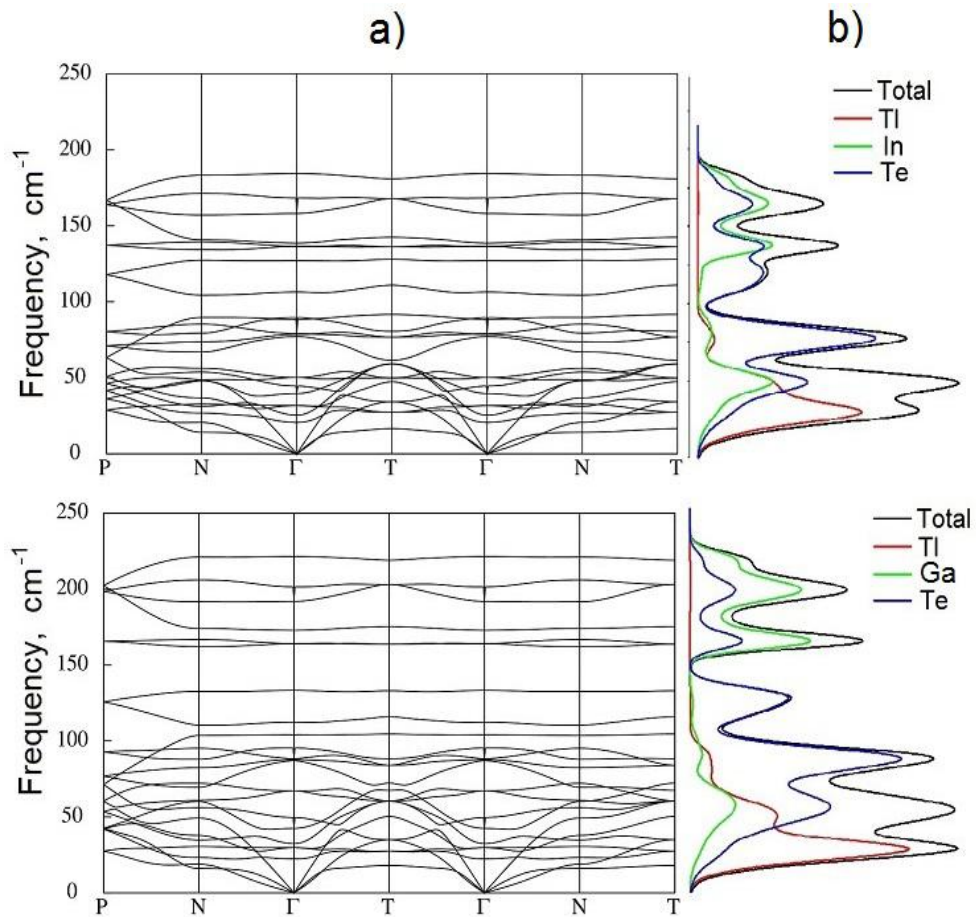


Fig. 3. Phonon spectra (a) and partial densities of states (b) of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals.

Table 1.

Frequencies of experimentally recorded (ω_{exper}) and theoretically calculated (ω_{cal}) R-active modes of TlGaTe₂, TlInTe₂ crystals in the center of the Brillouin zone and their symmetries

Modes	TlGaTe ₂						TlInTe ₂					
	ω_{cal} (cm ⁻¹)				ω_{exper} (cm ⁻¹)		ω_{cal} (cm ⁻¹)		ω_{exper} (cm ⁻¹)			
	[32]	[9]	[6]	This work	[31]	This work and [32]	[9]	This work	[31]	[6]	This work	
¹ E _g	16	38	19	31.6	-	-	30	33.4	-	-	-	
² E _g	60	58	60	69	67	66	42	51	48	49.3	48	
B _{1g}	76	80	76	88	-	-	72	80	-	-	-	
¹ B _{2g}	99	99	99	104	-	-	83	88	-	-	-	
A _{1g}	125	135	128	134	135	135	128	127	127	126.7	126.5	
³ E _g	152	168	157	165	165	164	139	137	138	138	139	
² B _{2g}	210	230	216	222	-	-	189	184.5	-	-	-	

Defects at the Tl sites would have little effect on these modes, although tellurium vibrations contribute to all three experimentally recorded modes. Defects associated with Te atoms will have the strongest effect on the A_{1g} mode at a frequency of 125-135 cm⁻¹ (Fig. 3b). The above is confirmed by the results of our studies of the Raman spectrum of TlInTe₂ crystals

doped with 5 at.% Fe [19], presented below. In the studied solid solutions, the local random distribution of In and Fe atoms associated with Te atoms will lead to fluctuations in the masses and force constants, and, as a result, to changes in the Raman spectrum and the appearance of a mode with a frequency of 120 cm⁻¹ (Fig. 4b).

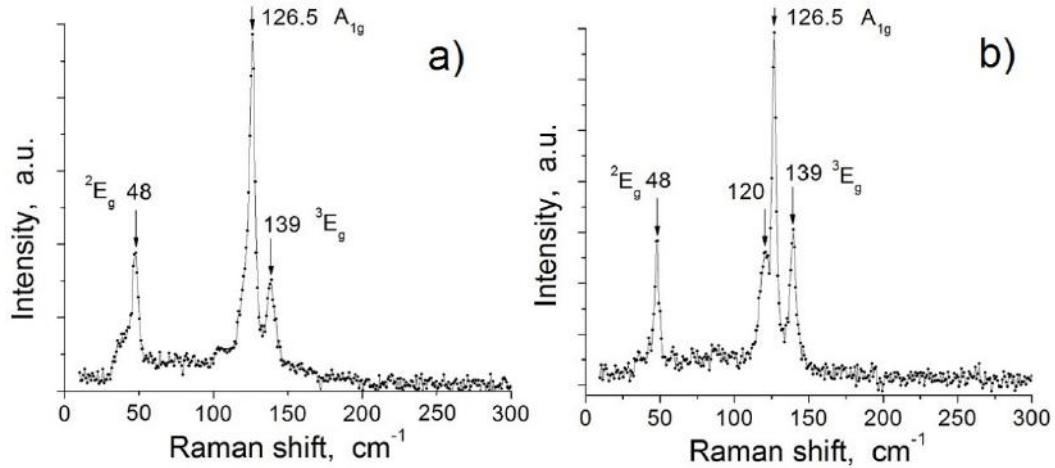


Fig. 4. Raman scattering spectra of single crystals: a) TlInTe₂; b) TlInTe₂ doped with 5.0 at.% Fe

3.2. Elastic constants of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals

We calculated the elastic constants of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals from first principles. It is well known that stresses and strains are described by second-rank tensors (σ_{ij} and ϵ_{kl}) in three-dimensional space and have nine components each. Within the framework of the generalized Hooke's law (2), they are related by a fourth-rank tensor C_{ijkl} , called the elasticity tensor, which generally contains 81 coefficients (elastic constants):

$$\sigma_{ij} = C_{ijkl} \epsilon_{kl} \quad (2)$$

The requirement for the stress and strain tensors (2) to be symmetric reduces the number of independent elastic constants to 36.

$$C_{ijkl} = C_{jikl} = C_{ijlk} = C_{jilk} \quad (3)$$

Considering that the elastic strain energy W :

$$W = \frac{1}{2} C_{ijkl} \epsilon_{ij} \epsilon_{kl} \quad (4)$$

From this it follows that $C_{ijkl} = C_{klij}$ and the number of independent elastic constants decreases to 21. Thus, in the most general case of low-symmetry crystals, there

are 21 independent components of the elasticity tensor.

Furthermore, taking into account the symmetry of a specific crystal lattice allows for an even more significant reduction in the number of independent elastic constants. For example, more highly symmetric crystals with tetragonal symmetry are described by six elastic constants C_{11} , C_{12} , C_{13} , C_{33} , C_{44} , C_{66} [34-36].

According to the notation of W. Voigt, the elements of the elasticity tensor C_{ijkl} can be written using the following substitution of indices $11 \rightarrow 1$, $22 \rightarrow 2$, $33 \rightarrow 3$, $23, 32 \rightarrow 4$, $12, 21 \rightarrow 5$, in the form of a 6×6 matrix:

$$\begin{pmatrix} C_{11} & C_{12} & C_{13} & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ C_{12} & C_{11} & C_{13} & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ C_{13} & C_{13} & C_{33} & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & C_{44} & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & C_{44} & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & 0 & \dots & C_{66} \end{pmatrix} \quad (5)$$

In crystals, certain relationships must be satisfied between the elastic constants, which follow from the equilibrium condition of the crystal lattice, the main requirement of which is the minimum energy density. These relationships, called the Born-Huang stability criteria, stem from the need to satisfy the stability criterion of the crystal lattice [37]. For the lattice to be

stable, the energy density must be a positive-definite quadratic form such that the energy increases with any small deformation. If we arrange the coefficients of the quadratic form in the form of matrix (5) without the elastic constant C_{16} , then, according to a well-known theorem of algebra, this quadratic form is positive-definite if the determinants of all matrices of successive ranks (principal minors) are positive. That is, must be positive C_{66} , $C_{44}C_{66}$, $C_{44}^2C_{66}$, $C_{33}C_{44}^2C_{66}$, $(C_{11}C_{33}-C_{13}^2)C_{44}^2C_{66}$, $(C_{11}-C_{12})(C_{11}C_{33}+C_{12}C_{33}-2C_{13}^2)$. Thus, the following conditions must be met:

$$C_{11} > 0; \quad C_{44} > 0; \quad C_{66} > 0; \quad C_{11} - C_{12} > 0$$

$$C_{11}C_{33} - C_{13}^2 > 0 \quad (6)$$

$$C_{11}C_{33} + C_{12}C_{33} - 2C_{13}^2 > 0$$

Similar relationships for crystals with hexagonal symmetry are presented in [38].

Table 2 presents the elastic constants C_{11} , C_{12} , C_{13} , C_{33} , C_{44} and C_{66} of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals, calculated from first principles, as well as published data on the elastic constants C_{ij} of TlInTe₂, TlGaTe₂, and TlInSe₂. As can be seen from Table 2, replacing the Se anion with Te decreases the elastic constants, while replacing the In cation with Ga strengthens the bonds in the crystals.

Table 2.

The values of elastic constants C_{ij} of tetragonal TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals in GPa (in square brackets is a link to the work from which the data was taken).

Crystals	Reference	Elastic constants, in GPa					
		C_{11}	C_{12}	C_{13}	C_{33}	C_{44}	C_{66}
TlGaTe ₂	This work	46.99	22.34	21.08	80.32	19.57	14.99
TlInTe ₂	This work	48.2	21.24	20.46	71.79	19.12	16.69
TlInSe ₂	[39]	42.11	12.59	8.93	83.54	11.88	11.24
TlInSe ₂	[4]	59,82	22,07	30,03	84,56	15,92	13,87
TlGaTe ₂	[6]	32,21	15,89	11,96	58,19	10,24	12,01
TlGaTe ₂	[9]	40.9	19.8	17.1	68.1	13.3	16.1
TlInTe ₂	[9]	39.6	18.1	16.4	60.8	14.5	15.3
TlInTe ₂	[7]	20.9	15.66	12.64	58.3	16.2	16.44

3.3. Elastic moduli of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals

In practice, along with elastic constants, bulk elastic moduli B are widely used, for example, when calculating Grüneisen parameters [40], coefficients of volumetric thermal expansion, thermodynamic quantities, and other anharmonic effects [41, 42]. By definition, bulk elastic moduli are determined from the relationship:

$$W = \frac{1}{2} B \xi^2 \quad (7)$$

Here the volumetric strain is related to the diagonal components of the strain tensor ε_{ii} by the relation

$$\frac{\xi}{3} = \varepsilon_{11} + \varepsilon_{22} + \varepsilon_{33} \quad (8)$$

From (4) and (7), taking into account (8), it is easy to obtain the relationship between the bulk modulus of elasticity and the elastic constants for crystals of tetragonal symmetry:

$$B_V = \frac{1}{9} (2C_{11} + C_{33} + 2C_{12} + 4C_{13}) \quad (9)$$

An expression similar to (9) for the bulk modulus of elasticity B in the Voigt bound approximation of crystals with tetragonal symmetry is given in [43, 44]. In the case of crystals with cubic symmetry with $C_{11}=C_{33}$ and $C_{12}=C_{13}$, expression (9) transforms into a relationship between the bulk

modulus of elasticity and the elastic constants for crystals with cubic symmetry:

$$B = \frac{1}{3}(C_{11} + 2C_{12}) \quad (10)$$

According to the data [43, 44], the Voigt shear modulus G_V is equal to

$$G_V = \frac{1}{30}(M + 3C_{11} - 3C_{12} + 12C_{44} + 6C_{66}) \quad (11)$$

where, $M = C_{11} + C_{12} + 2C_{33} - 4C_{13}$

The value of the bulk modulus of elasticity B_R in the Reuss approximation (Reuss bound) of crystals with tetragonal symmetry [43, 44]:

$$B_R = C^2/M, \quad C^2 = (C_{11} + C_{12}) \cdot C_{33} - 2C_{13}^2 \quad (12)$$

The value of the shear modulus G_R in the Reuss approximation (Reuss bound) of crystals with tetragonal symmetry [54, 55]:

$$G_K = 15 \left\{ \frac{18B_V}{C^2} + \left[\frac{6}{(C_{11} - C_{12})} + \frac{6}{C_{44}} + \frac{3}{C_{66}} \right]^{-1} \right\} \quad (13)$$

Using energy considerations, Hill proved [45], that the Voigt and Reuss equations represent upper and lower limits on the true polycrystalline constants, and he recommended that the practical estimate of polycrystalline moduli be the arithmetic mean of the extreme values. The Voigt bound is obtained from the average polycrystalline moduli based on the assumption of uniform strain throughout the polycrystal and is the upper limit of the actual effective moduli, while the Reuss bound is obtained by assuming uniform stress and is the lower limit of the actual effective moduli. The arithmetic mean of the Voigt and Reuss bounds is called the Voigt-Reuss-Hill approximation [45]. In terms of the Voigt-Reuss-Hill approximations

$$B = (B_V + B_R)/2, \quad G = (G_V + G_R)/2 \quad (14)$$

Young's modulus (Young's modulus E) is defined as

$$E = 9BG/(3B + G) \quad (15)$$

And the Poisson's ratio is calculated using the following formula:

$$\nu = (3B - 2G)/[2(3B + G)] \quad (16)$$

The values of elastic moduli and Poisson's ratios of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals calculated by us from relations (9) - (16), as well as known data from the literature [4, 6, 7, 9], are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

The values of elastic modulus and Poisson's ratio TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals

Compounds	Elastic modulus, GPa							Poisson's ratio, ν
	Bulk Voigt, B_V	Bulk Reuss, B_R	Bulk, B	Shear Voigt, G_V	Shear Reuss, G_R	Shear, G	Young's, E	
TlGaTe ₂ This work	33.7	32.13	33	18.15	16.03	17.1	43.8	0.28
TlInTe ₂ This work	32.5	31.6	32	18.05	17.5	17.8	45	0.27
TlInSe ₂ [4]	-	-	40	-	-	17	44.7	0.31
TlGaTe ₂ [6]	-	-	22	-	-	20	46	0.15
TlGaTe ₂ [9]	-	-	28.1	-	-	15	38.3	0.27
TlInTe ₂ [9]	-	-	26.5	-	-	14.7	37.2	0.27
TlInTe ₂ [7]	-	-	19	-	-	10.8	27.2	0.26

4. CONCLUSION

This paper presents the results of a study of the phonon properties of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals.

The phonon properties of TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals were investigated experimentally using Raman scattering. The Raman spectra of TlInTe₂ crystals revealed spectral lines at 48 cm⁻¹ (²E_g), 126.5

cm⁻¹ (A_{1g}) and 139 cm⁻¹ (³E_g), while those of TlGaTe₂ crystals revealed lines at 66 cm⁻¹ (²E_g), 135 cm⁻¹ (A_{1g}), and 164 cm⁻¹ (³E_g).

The experimentally obtained frequencies are in good agreement with theoretically calculated ones. Optical mode dispersion was calculated from first principles, and the partial densities of states (PDOS) projected onto atoms and optical phonon frequencies were determined. It was found that the dispersion of optical phonons in all symmetric directions except the PN line is insignificant, indicating weak interatomic interactions in these directions. Furthermore, the presence of lighter Ga atoms shifts the phonon spectra of the TlGaTe₂ compound toward higher frequencies (>200 cm⁻¹). The presented partial phonon densities of states for TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ crystals show that the main contribution at low frequencies comes from the heaviest atoms, at medium frequencies from Te atoms, and at high frequencies from In and Ga atoms. Analysis of the calculated results indicates that substituting gallium atoms for indium atoms in the compounds should experimentally manifest itself in behavior with changes in the composition of the ²E_g and ³E_g modes.

It is shown that defects associated with Te atoms will have the strongest effect on the A_{1g} mode at a frequency of 125-135 cm⁻¹. The above is confirmed by the results of our studies of the Raman spectrum of TlInTe₂ crystals doped with 5 at.% Fe [19]. In the studied solid solutions, the local random distribution of In and Fe atoms bound to Te atoms will lead to fluctuations in the masses and force constants, and, as a result, to changes in the Raman spectrum and the appearance of a mode with a frequency of 120 cm⁻¹.

The values of six elastic constants C₁₁, C₁₂, C₁₃, C₃₃, C₄₄ and C₆₆ of the TlInTe₂ and TlGaTe₂ compounds were also calculated from first principles. The relationships between the elastic constants corresponding to the condition of crystal lattice stability for crystals with tetragonal symmetry are presented. The bulk modulus, shear and Young's moduli, and Poisson's ratio were determined in the Voigt-Reuss-Hill approximation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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