Large Low-Field Magnetoresistance in Perovskite-type CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ without Double Exchange

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We report the observation of large low-field magnetoresistance (MR) behavior in CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ with a perovskite-related (AA'$_3$B$_2$O$_{12}$) structure. Ca$^2+\text{Cu}^{3+}3\text{Mn}^{4+}4\text{O}_{12}$ is semiconducting and orders ferromagnetically at 355 K. However, it has neither mixed valency of Mn for double-exchange magnetic interactions, nor Jahn-Teller Mn$^{3+}$ ions, nor a metal-insulator transition. The MR smoothly increases with decreasing temperature and is $-40\%$ at 20 K. The low-field MR response does not show the strong temperature-dependent decay characteristic of the LnMnO$_3$ perovskite-based systems and appears consistent with an intergrain-interdomain tunneling origin. [S0031-9007(99)08905-X]

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A common property of the alkaline earth (A) substituted rare earth manganates, Ln$_{1-x}$A$_x$MnO$_3$ is a semiconductor-to-metal transition near a paramagnetic-to-ferromagnetic transition, the Curie temperature ($T_C$) [1–3]. In general, the highest magnetoresistance [MR = ($\rho_H - \rho_0$)/$\rho_0$, where $\rho_H$ and $\rho_0$ are the resistivities at applied magnetic fields of $H$ and 0, respectively] is observed close to the semiconductor-to-metal transition temperature ($T_{IM}$). It is considered that in the rare earth perovskites the CMR originates from an applied magnetic field enhanced spin-charge-coupled magnetotransport phenomena. In Ln$_{1-x}$A$_x$MnO$_3$, A ion substitution for Ln produces Mn$^{4+}$ ions with itinerant eg holes which overlap with O 2$p$ orbitals. The double-exchange (DE) [4] interaction between Mn$^{3+}$-O-Mn$^{4+}$ mediates charge transfer and ferromagnetic interaction, and below the Curie temperature, $T_C$, the sample is metallic (i.e., $T_{IM} \approx T_C$). Near $T_C$ the applied magnetic field tends to align the local spins, which enhances electron transfer and leads to a dramatic decrease in the observed resistivity.

Because the MR of the colossal magnetoresistance (CMR) materials can be very large, ~100%, these materials have potential applications for magnetic memory and actuator devices. However, before practical applications can be realized critical properties of the CMR materials must be improved. For example, the MR values are high at the $T_C/T_{IM}$ transition and at high $H$ (several tesla), but the response at low field and at room temperature is negligible. Although much effort has been made to improve the MR response of the manganates, the MR at room temperature and low fields is significantly lower than that of the conventional giant magnetoresistance (GMR) materials [2,5]. Further, the MR effect of the manganates is sharply peaked near $T = T_C/T_{IM}$, thereby yielding a narrow temperature range of stable high MR. For practical application, significant temperature stability is required.

The recent report of the pyrochlore Tl$^{3+}2\text{Mn}^{4+}2\text{O}_7$ compound represented a novel extension of the CMR materials both by virtue of the absence of Mn$^{3+}$-O-Mn$^{4+}$ DE and of its departure from the perovskite structure [6,7]. Here we report the observation of a large MR for the first time in a perovskitelike manganate, CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ with only Mn$^{4+}$-O-Mn$^{4+}$ interactions at the B site, hence without the possibility of DE operating. Moreover, both the magnitude and thermal stability of this MR are shown to be of potential technological utility.

CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ was investigated by Chenavas et al. and Bochu et al. [8,9]. Single crystal X-ray structural analysis showed that ACu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ crystallizes in a perovskite-like phase (AA'$_3$B$_2$O$_{12}$) with cubic symmetry (space group Im$ar{3}$) with a doubling of the ideal perovskite cell. The doubling of the unit cell is due to the ordering of the Ca$^{2+}$ and Cu$^{2+}$ ions and the distortion of the oxygen sublattice which leads to a tilted three-dimensional network of Mn$^{4+}$ octahedra sharing corners (Fig. 1). The Mn-O-Mn bond angle is ~142° instead of 180°, as in the ideal perovskite structure. This distortion creates two different polyhedra at the A site: a slightly distorted 12 oxygen-coordinated cubo-octahedral Ca (A) site and a grossly distorted icosahedron at the Cu (A') site. There are three sets of Cu-O distances at ~1.9, 2.8, and 3.2 Å, each forming an approximately square-planar coordination. The unusual feature of this structure is that it requires a Jahn-Teller ion, such as Cu$^{2+}$, at the A' site [9].

CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ was prepared from a stoichiometric mixture of high purity Ca(OH)$_2$, CuO, and MnO$_2$ mixed with 15% KCIO$_3$. The mixture was sintered at 1000°C and 58 kbar for 30 min. The product was ground to a
highly distorted 12-coordinated polyhedra around the Cu$_2$ corner-sharing MnO$_{12}$ alternate cavities created by the three-dimensional network of corner-sharing MnO$_6$ octahedra.

finite powder and washed several times with deionized water under ultrasonic conditions to dissolve KCl. The powder x-ray diffraction (SCINTAG PAD V, CuK$_{α}$) indicated formation of single phase CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ with cubic symmetry (space group $Im3$) and a unit cell with $a = 7.21348(4)$ Å in good agreement with previous results [8,9]. Chemical analysis (inductively coupled plasma emission spectrometer (ICP); Baird Atomic Model 2070) shows that Ca:Cu:Mn is 1:2.97:4.02 in excellent agreement, within the experimental error (2%), with the expected values for CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$. Chemical titration. The particularly high resolution of these spectra also allows the identification of a third $a3$ subfeature common to both the CaMnO$_3$ and CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ spectra. Thus the strength and structure of the Mn preedge further reinforce the Mn$^{4+}$ assignment in this material. The Cu K edge XAS (not shown) indicated unambiguously that the formal valence of Cu is 2+ in this and a related class of materials with Mn substituted at the Cu sites [12].

The dc electrical resistivity ($ρ$) and MR measurements were carried out using a conventional four-probe technique. The resistivity samples were pressed under 15 kbar of pressure. Gold leads were attached to the sample with baked silver paste. The magnetoresistance and magnetic measurements were carried out from 20 to 400 K in a SQUID magnetometer (MPMS, Quantum Design). The temperature dependence of the low-field magnetization of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ in Fig. 3A shows a ferromagnetic transition near 355 K. The coercivity ($H_c$) is only

![FIG. 1. Structure of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ indicating the MnO$_6$ polyhedral structure. The cubooctahedral CaO$_{12}$ and the highly distorted 12-coordinated polyhedra around the Cu$^{2+}$ fill alternate cavities created by the three-dimensional network of corner-sharing MnO$_6$ octahedra.](image1.png)

![FIG. 2. The Mn K edges of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$, along with those of the Mn$^{3+}$-LaMnO$_3$; and the Mn$^{4+}$-CaMnO$_3$ and Mn$^{4+}$-MnO$_2$ standards. The inset is an expanded view of the pre-edge $a$ features of these spectra.](image2.png)
magnetic interactions in manganates. Mn angle is a critical factor in determining the nature of the ordering. It is well established that the Mn-O-Mn bond as a function of temperature (B).

70 G at 20 K, and 10 G at 300 K (see Fig. 3A-inset) indicating that CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ is a soft ferromagnetic material. Recall that the Mn$^{4+}$-pyrochlore, Tl$_2$Mn$_2$O$_7$ manifests a coupled insulator-to-metal and paramagnetic-to-ferromagnetic transitions [6,7]. CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ provides an example of a perovskite-type structure with Mn only in the 4+ oxidation state with ferromagnetic ordering. It is well established that the Mn-O-Mn bond angle is a critical factor in determining the nature of the magnetic interactions in manganates. Mn$^{4+}$-O-Mn$^{4+}$ (d$^3$) 180$^\circ$ superexchange interactions generally lead to antiferromagnetic ordering while 90$^\circ$ superexchange will result in ferromagnetic ordering [13]. It was suggested that the ferromagnetism of Tl$_2$Mn$_2$O$_7$ is due to superexchange interactions, as the Mn-O-Mn bond angle of 134$^\circ$ is intermediate between 90$^\circ$ and 180$^\circ$ [7]. The Mn-O-Mn bond angle in CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ is 142$^\circ$, therefore, the observed ferromagnetic transition similarly may be related to superexchange interactions. However, the magnetic interactions in CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ are more complex than those in Tl$_2$Mn$_2$O$_7$ involving the heteromagnetic ions, Mn$^{4+}$ and Cu$^{2+}$ arranged in alternate sites of the perovskite lattice. Thus the competing coupling between the magnetic A$^\prime$-site Cu$^{2+}$/Cu$^{2+}$ and B-site Mn$^{4+}$/Mn$^{4+}$ ions may influence its properties also.

Qualitative Seebeck measurement of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ indicates n-type behavior. The $\log_{10} \rho$ as a function of temperature in Fig. 3B shows that CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ is semiconducting between 20–300 K with a room temperature resistivity ($\rho_{RT}$) of $\sim 1.8 \times 10^3$ $\Omega$ cm. The plot of $\log_{10} \rho$ vs $1/T$ (see Fig. 4) indicates a temperature dependence more complex than simple activation. Although there is a change in the effective activation energies from above to below $T_C$ the limited temperature region above $T_C$ makes definitive conclusions difficult. There is no clear critical anomaly in the vicinity of $T_C$ either in the resistivity or its derivative.

The magnetoresistance of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ is $-40.3\%$ at 20 K and 5 T (Fig. 3B). It is evident in Fig. 3C that the temperature stability of the MR of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ is superior to that of La$_{0.75}$Ca$_{0.25}$MnO$_3$, a typical CMR manganate.

As indicated above, the large MR in CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ is not likely due to DE mechanism. Moreover, we also prepared CaCu$_{2.5}$Mn$_{4.5}$O$_{12}$ [Ca(Cu$^{2+}$,Mn$^{4+}$)$_{12}$] and CaCu$_5$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ [Ca(Cu$^{2+}$,Mn$^{3+}$)$_{12}$] with mixed valent Mn$^{3+}$/Mn$^{4+}$ on the B site and the possibility of Mn$^{3+}$/O-Mn$^{4+}$ DE mechanism operating [12]. However, the MR of these compounds is significantly smaller than that of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$. Thus it is concluded that in the CaCu$_{3-n}$Mn$_{n+4}$O$_{12}$ system the MR is not due to the DE mechanism.

Figure 4A shows the MR as a function of $H$ at 20 K. The MR sharply increases at low fields, and almost saturates at $\sim 1$ T. The MR is $-12\%$ at 0.05 T. La$_{0.6}$Y$_{0.07}$Ca$_{0.33}$MnO$_3$ was reported to have a CMR, $\sim 100\%$ at high fields, but the MR is only 6.5% at 0.05 T [3]. In other systems, such as La(B)CoO$_3$ [14], Cr-based chalcogenide [15], and Tl$_2$Mn$_2$O$_7$ [6,7] the low-field MR is also very low. Figure 4B compares $MR_{P}$ vs $M_{P}$ (where $MR_{P}$ and $M_{P}$ are the MR at $H$ and 5 T, respectively) as a function of $H$ in several systems [3,6,14,15]. At low fields, CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ exhibits a much sharper response than any of the other systems. The MR as a function of field at 300 K is shown in Fig. 4A, inset. In contrast to the MR at 20 K, the MR at room temperature is almost saturated at only
FIG. 5. MR as a function of $H$ for CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ at 20 and 300 K (A). MR$_{RT}$/MR$_{T}$ as a function of $H$ for CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$, La$_{0.6}$Y$_{0.07}$Ca$_{0.33}$MnO$_3$, La$_{0.9}$Sr$_{0.1}$CoO$_3$, FeCr$_2$S$_4$, and Tl$_2$Mn$_2$O$_7$ (B).

At low fields and room temperature, the MR sharply responds to $H$. The $\rho_{RT}$ of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ (1.8 $\times$ 10$^3$ $\Omega$ cm) is 8 orders of magnitude higher than that of permalloy, 80Ni-20Fe (10$^{-5}$ $\Omega$ cm) [16]. If we define $\rho_0 \times$ MR as a relative output voltage, $\rho_0 \times$ MR of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ is $\sim$10$^6$ higher than that of permalloy at 10 G and room temperature. This behavior is promising for potential application of CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ as a magnetic sensor material.

Thus, by virtue of its Mn$^{4+}$ character, CaCu$_3$Mn$_4$O$_{12}$ represents the first perovskitelike, large-MR material for which double exchange is precluded from driving the ferromagnetic (FM) exchange or MR. Moreover, it is also the first of this perovskite-based class of materials to lack a magnetically coupled IM transition. Regarding the MR mechanism in this material, the similar saturation fields in the FM-domain reorientation (the coercive field) and in the MR suggests an interdomain/grain tunneling mechanism origin for the MR [5]. The relatively smooth vanishing of the thermal variation of the MR near $T_C$ would be consistent with the coupling of the MR (to first order) to the square of the magnetization order parameter [5]. Additional enhancement of the MR at low temperatures would be anticipated from the freezing out of phonon and domain-wall-impurity assisted tunneling as well as from localization effects. Future work on these issues and on the role of the Cu sublattice magnetic moments on both the magnetism and transport are clearly called for.

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