

# Analytical Methods

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4 **Quantitative analysis of the water of crystallization of**  
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6 **gypsum by near-infrared spectroscopy in Yungang**  
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9 **Grottoes**

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4 **Abstract:** Near infrared spectroscopy is considered to be an effective  
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6 analytical tool which is used in various fields, however, it is rarely used in the  
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8 analysis of water of crystallization of rocks on the stone relics. In the present  
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10 study, calibration model was developed for non-destructive estimation of  
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12 water of crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum in the rocks by fourier  
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14 transform near infrared spectroscopy. A total of 51 samples were prepared in  
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16 the laboratory to simulate the actual samples from Yungang Grottoes, their  
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18 fourier transform near infrared spectra were correlated to water of  
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20 crystallization content by means of partial least square regression, and then  
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22 calibration model was developed. The 5 actual samples from Yungang  
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24 Grottoes were analyzed by X-ray diffraction and X-ray fluorescence. The  
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26 optimal model was achieved with the correlation coefficient of 0.9899 and the  
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28 root mean square error of cross validation of 0.2190, and the correlation  
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30 coefficient and the root mean square error of prediction of the validation set  
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32 were 0.9834 and 0.4558, respectively.  
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44 **Keywords:** Near infrared spectroscopy; Partial least square; Dihydrate  
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46 gypsum; Quantitative analysis; In situ measurement.  
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## 1 Introduction

Yungang Grottoes (A.D. 460-524) have a very significant position in the history of Chinese sculpture art. In recent years, the weathering of rocks in the grottoes is getting more and more serious.<sup>1-3</sup> Water of crystallization content of minerals is an important factor for the weathering of these rocks. In Yungang Grottoes, the main ingredient is kaolin, in addition, sulfur element can be detected in the actual samples. Obviously, sulfur element mainly comes from the surrounding environment where an industrial city is. The sulfur element is found that it exists in the form of gypsum by X-ray diffraction (XRD). It has been reported that gypsum is formed by sulfite hemihydrate.<sup>4,5</sup> Some minerals reacting with water will turn water into one of their components, thus these new kinds of compounds generate.<sup>6</sup> Such minerals are defined as precipitated salt. Gypsum is the typical representative of the type minerals, which can absorb a certain amount of water to form dihydrate gypsum (Fig. 1). The swelling of rocks after absorbing water not only lead to volume dilatation, but also create pressure on the surrounding rocks.<sup>7-12</sup> As a result, stone relics will suffer from the dangers of cracking. Therefore, it is significant to detect water of crystallization content of gypsum on the scene in Yungang Grottoes.

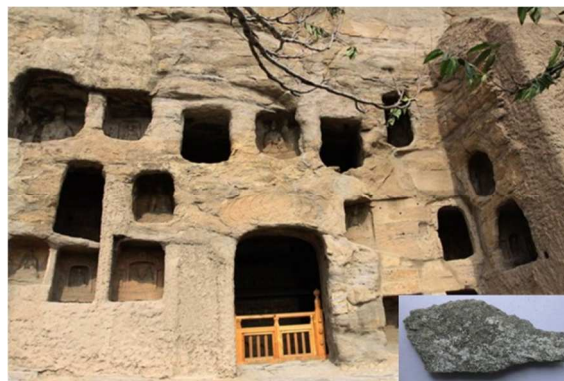


Fig. 1. Cave 39 of Yungang Grottoes

Near infrared (NIR) spectroscopy combined with chemometrics has been proved to be an easy, convenient and non-destructive quantitative technology for components of complex samples.<sup>13-17</sup> Its region is a part of the electromagnetic spectrum between the microwave and the visible wavelength, related to vibration and combination overtones of the C-H, N-H, O-H and S-H bonds.<sup>18, 19</sup> Therefore, NIR has been widely used in the fields of foodstuffs,<sup>20, 21</sup> tobaccos,<sup>22, 23</sup> agriculture,<sup>24-26</sup> medicines,<sup>27, 28</sup> biological tissues,<sup>29-31</sup> polymers<sup>32</sup> and petrochemical products.<sup>33, 34</sup> In the field of mineralogy, the NIR has been used to detect the presence of gypsum.<sup>35, 36</sup> However, it is rarely reported that NIR has been applied to determine the water of crystallization content of minerals on the stone relics. Due to the characteristic of non-destructive analysis of NIR, this method is very suitable for detecting stone relics in situ.

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4 In this paper, the water of crystallization content of gypsum from Yungang  
5 Grottoes has been determined by NIR. It is the first time to use  
6 non-destructive quantitative technology of NIR to analyze the precipitated salt  
7 in situ. Fresh rocks without gypsum around Yungang Grottoes were made into  
8 powders, and a different proportion of dihydrate gypsum was added to the  
9 powders. Then the powders were pressed into wafers as calibration samples of  
10 near infrared model, and the wafers were analyzed by NIR. Partial least  
11 squares (PLS) regression was used as algorithm of the model. The  
12 experimental results show that this model can be applied in the actual  
13 measurement. The near infrared spectrums of stone relics in Yungang Grottoes  
14 are achieved by portable near infrared spectrometer. When the near infrared  
15 spectra are imported into the near infrared model, the water of crystallization  
16 content of gypsum can be achieved immediately.

## 38 **2 Experimental**

### 39 **2.1 Materials**

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46 Fresh rocks without gypsum were obtained around the Yungang Grottoes.  
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48 Actual samples which were peeling rock fragments on the ground were  
49 collected from Cave 38 and 39 (A.D. 494-525) in Yungang Grottoes.  
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51 Dihydrate gypsum ( $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , analytical purity grade) was purchased from  
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## 7 2.2 Chemical characterization of the 5 actual samples 8 9

10 The 5 actual samples were analyzed by using wide angle X-ray diffraction  
11 (XRD, X'pert PRO, Panalytical, Holland) and X-ray fluorescence (XRF, S4  
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13 PIONEER, Bruker AXS, Germany).  
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## 18 2.3 Laboratory samples preparation 19 20

21 Fresh rocks were ground into powders, and then the powders were divided  
22 into 51 groups. A certain mass of dihydrate gypsum was added to the powders  
23 according to the quality ratios of water of crystallization of 0.1%, 0.2%,  
24 0.3% ... 5.0%, 5.1%, respectively. Fresh rocks and dihydrate gypsum were  
25 mixed homogeneously by oscillating mixer (Shimadzu, Japan). Then the  
26 mixed powders pressed into wafers were prepared for near-infrared spectral  
27 acquisition.  
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## 40 2.4 NIR spectral measurement 41 42

43 The spectra of the actual samples were recorded by using a FTNIR  
44 spectrometer (TerraSpec 4 St-Res, ASD, USA) which was a portable  
45 instrument. The spectra could be obtained in situ when the NIR probe gently  
46 pressed on the actual sample surface. All the NIR spectra were collected from  
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4 350 to 2500 nm in diffuse reflectance mode. The FTNIR spectrometer  
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7 collected spectra of samples at 10 nm interval. To increase SNR (signal to  
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10 noise ratio), both actual samples and laboratory samples were scanned 32  
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12 times by FTNIR spectrometer, and each spectrum was averaged from three  
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14 parallel measurements. The temperature and relative humidity were  
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16 maintained at 25°C and 40%, respectively.  
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## 20 21 2.5 PLS modeling 22

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24 The NIR model of the water of crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum  
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26 was performed with the software package TQ Analyst (thermo, USA). 51  
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28 laboratory samples were taken as calibration set for building the PLS model,  
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30 the 5 actual samples which were collected from Cave 38 and 39 in Yungang  
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32 Grottoes were used as validation set to test the practicability of the method.  
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37 The spectral datasets were correlated with water of crystallization content  
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39 by using partial least squares regression algorithm. To evaluate the  
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41 performance of the PLS regression model, the correlation coefficient (R) and  
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43 root mean square error of cross validation (RMSECV) which were determined  
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45 by leave-one-out cross validation (LOO-CV) were used. The RMSECV was  
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47 the prediction error of a calibration model, and it was defined as the standard  
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49 deviation between spectral data and reference values in the cross-validation  
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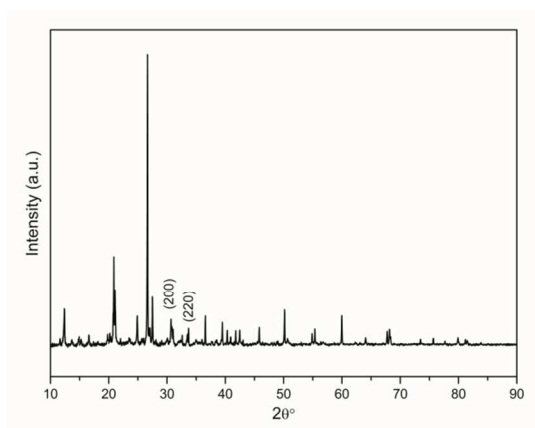
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4 sample set. The value provides the average uncertainty that can be used for  
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7 predictions of unknown samples, so an optimum model is based on minimum  
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10 value of RMSECV. The factor number for PLS model was also determined by  
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12 using LOO-CV with F-test. In addition, the optimization of PLS model needed  
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14 to avoid the influence of drifting baseline and background in the spectra by  
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16 using multiplicative signal correction (MSC) and derivative calculation. The  
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18 outliers of PLS model were removed by using mahalanobis distance. For the  
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20 validation set, correlation coefficient (R) and root mean square error of  
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22 prediction (RMSEP) between the reference and prediction content were used  
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25 to estimate the prediction of the developed model.  
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### 31 **3 Results and discussion**

#### 32 33 34 3.1 Chemical analysis of the actual samples

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37 The XRD pattern of the actual sample was used to investigate the  
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39 compound form of sulfur element existing in the rocks of Yungang Grottoes.  
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41 As shown in Fig. 2, the rocks of Yungang Grottoes were mainly composed of  
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43 kaolin, and the diffraction peaks of dihydrate gypsum could also be found. The  
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45 typical diffraction peaks of dihydrate gypsum were displayed with peaks at  
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48 30.7° and 33.7° in the XRD pattern, which represented crystal plane (200) and  
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51 (220), respectively. Due to the low content of dihydrate gypsum, the intensity  
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4 of diffraction peaks was weak. So it could be concluded that sulfur element  
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7 was present in the form of dihydrate gypsum in the rocks. By means of X-ray  
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10 fluorescence (XRF), the content of sulfur element can be accurately  
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12 determined. Then according to the chemical formula of dihydrate gypsum, the  
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14 water of crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum can be also obtained.  
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18 Table I shows the water of crystallization content of 5 actual samples.



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35 Fig. 2. XRD diffractogram of the actual sample from Yungang Grottoes  
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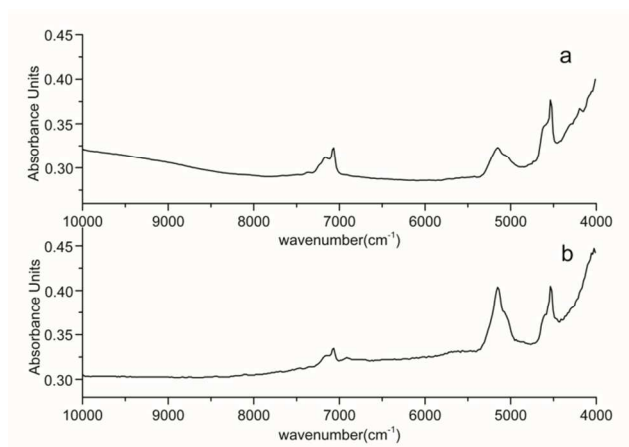
Table I. The water of crystallization content of 5 actual samples obtained by the reference method

Samples	Sulfur element content (wt%)	Water of crystallization content (wt%)
Sample 1 from Cave 38	1.63	1.83
Sample 2 from Cave 38	2.24	2.52
Sample 3 from Cave 39	0.81	0.91
Sample 4 from Cave 39	0.47	0.53
Sample 5 from Cave 39	1.89	2.13

### 3.2 FTNIR spectra

The quantitative NIR model was built with “TQ Analyst” software package by using PLS regression. The selection of spectral regions that participated in the modeling was a method of data reduction. Analysis regions of the spectra which were too broad would lead to increase invalid information, and reduce the rate of effective information. Conversely, it would lead to the loss of useful information, and reduce the accuracy of the NIR model. In the study,  $4458.62\text{-}5060.30\text{cm}^{-1}$  and  $5106.58\text{-}5199.15\text{cm}^{-1}$  were selected to participate in the modeling. Generally, it was difficult to assign spectral regions to specific functional groups in the NIR. However, for the dihydrate gypsum, the two

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4 spectral ranges were considered to be assigned to  $\nu_s(\text{OH})+\delta(\text{OH})$  and  
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7  $\nu_a(\text{OH})+\delta(\text{OH})$ , respectively.<sup>37</sup> The spectral regions selected were considered  
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10 to be the optimal option of the NIR model. Fig. 3 represents the spectra of the  
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12 samples that were taken in the whole NIR range. Compared with the spectrum  
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14 of the actual sample, the absorption bands in the spectrum of the laboratory  
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16 sample were essentially the same with the actual sample, just showed  
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18 differences from the actual sample in peak intensity. The laboratory sample  
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20 differences from the actual sample in peak intensity. The laboratory sample  
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22 could preferably simulate the actual sample. Therefore, it could be proved to  
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24 be a feasible method for the determination of the water of crystallization  
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26 content.  
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46 Fig. 3. The NIR spectra of the samples in the whole NIR range. (a) The actual  
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48 sample from Yungang Grottoes. (b) The laboratory sample.  
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51 Spectral preprocessing methods including multiplicative signal correction  
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53 (MSC) and derivative calculation for the NIR model were optimized by using  
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4 LOO-CV. In this process, different preprocessing methods were used to obtain  
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6 the optimized NIR model. MSC could avoid the influence of inconstant  
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8 optical path due to the non-uniformity of particles. Derivative calculation  
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10 could remove drifting baseline, and separate overlapping information. Table  
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12 II summarizes the results that were obtained by using different preprocessing  
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14 methods. According to both the correlation coefficient (R) and the root mean  
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16 square error of cross validation (RMSECV), it could be found that MSC with  
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18 first derivative could significantly improve the NIR model. Fig. 4 represents  
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20 that the optimal factor number for the NIR model was found to be 3.  
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28 Table II. NIR models and the results of cross-validation  
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Analyte	Preprocessing	Wavelength regions	R	RMSECV	Factor
water of crystallization	MSC	4458.62-5060.30cm <sup>-1</sup>	0.9531	0.3112	6
		5106.58-5199.15cm <sup>-1</sup>			
water of crystallization	MSC + first derivative	4458.62-5060.30cm <sup>-1</sup>	0.9899	0.2190	3
		5106.58-5199.15cm <sup>-1</sup>			
water of crystallization	MSC + second derivative	4458.62-5060.30cm <sup>-1</sup>	0.9727	0.2934	3
		5106.58-5199.15cm <sup>-1</sup>			

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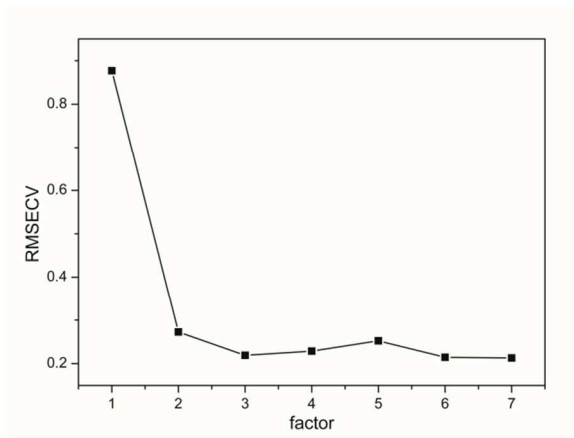


Fig. 4. Relationship between factor number and RMSECV

### 3.3 Removal of outliers

In the process of the modeling, the predictive accuracy of the model would greatly reduce when some samples were added to the model. Such samples were defined as outliers. It was obvious that the outliers were harmful to the NIR model. Therefore, the outliers should be removed by using mahalanobis distance. The mahalanobis distance showed the covariance distance of the data, it was an effective method to calculate the similarity of two unknown samples. The greater value of mahalanobis distance showed lower similarity. Fig. 5 shows that there were 6 outliers to be removed in the calibration set.

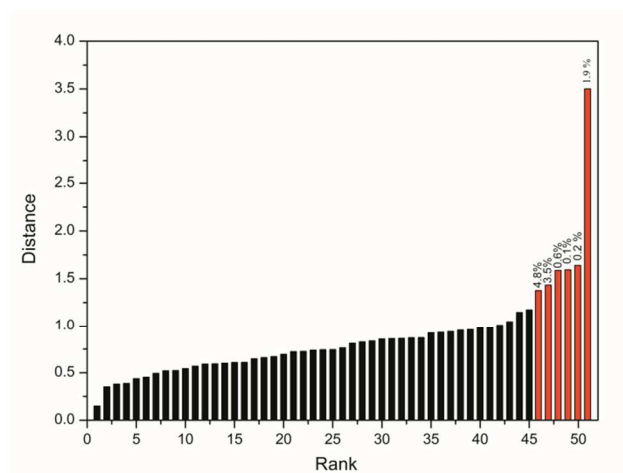


Fig. 5. Mahalanobis distances of the 51 laboratory samples

### 3.4 Quantitative model

The quantitative NIR model was built with the software package TQ Analyst. The wavelength regions, spectral preprocessing methods and factor numbers for the PLS calibration model was optimized combinatorially by using LOO-CV.  $4458.62\text{-}5060.30\text{cm}^{-1}$  and  $5106.58\text{-}5199.15\text{cm}^{-1}$  were considered to be the optimal option for the NIR model. From both the correlation coefficient (R) and the RMSECV in the table II, MSC with first derivative was selected to preprocess the spectra. The optimal factor number for the NIR model was determined to be 3. Besides, there were 6 outliers to be removed by mahalanobis distance. Based on the above work, the correlation coefficient (R) and the RMSECV of the optimal model were found to be 0.9899 and 0.2190, respectively. The meaning of the value obtained from the

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4 NIR model could be interpreted as the weight percentage of the water of  
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7 crystallization in the rock in the measurement area.  
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### 10 3.5 Validation of the NIR model

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13 In order to measure water of crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum, 45  
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15 laboratory samples were finally used to develop the calibration model and 5  
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18 actual samples were used as external samples to validate the NIR model. The  
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21 developed calibration model using cross validation gave the correlation  
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24 coefficient (R) was 0.9899, and RMSECV was 0.2190. Yungang Grottoes is  
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27 the cultural heritage of world, so the 5 actual samples from Cave 38 and 39 are  
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30 very precious. Then the optimized NIR model was used to predict the water of  
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33 crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum in the actual samples. Fig. 6 shows  
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36 the relationship between the predictive values and the reference values of the  
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39 actual samples in the validation set. In the figure, the predictive values were  
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42 predicted by the NIR model obtained above, and the reference values were  
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45 from chemical test. It can be found that a good linearity was obtained in the  
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48 content range of 0.3%-5.1%. With linear regression of these points, the  
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51 correlation coefficient (R) and root mean square error of prediction (RMSEP)  
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54 were found to be 0.9834 and 0.4558, respectively. However, a bias could be  
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57 found in the fig. 6, this may be caused by random errors because there were  
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only 5 actual samples. If there were more actual samples to be used, the error may be corrected.

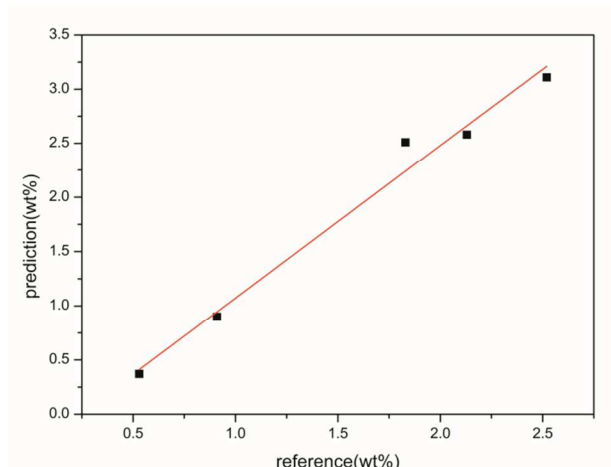


Fig. 6. Regression line of PLS model for the water of crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum obtained by FTNIR spectroscopy

In order to make up for the lack of the actual samples, some laboratory samples which were prepared according to random quality ratios were chosen as validation set. Fig. 7 shows the relationship between the predictive values and the reference values of these random laboratory samples. With linear regression of these points, the correlation coefficient (R) and root mean square error of prediction (RMSEP) were found to be 0.9779 and 0.3736, respectively.

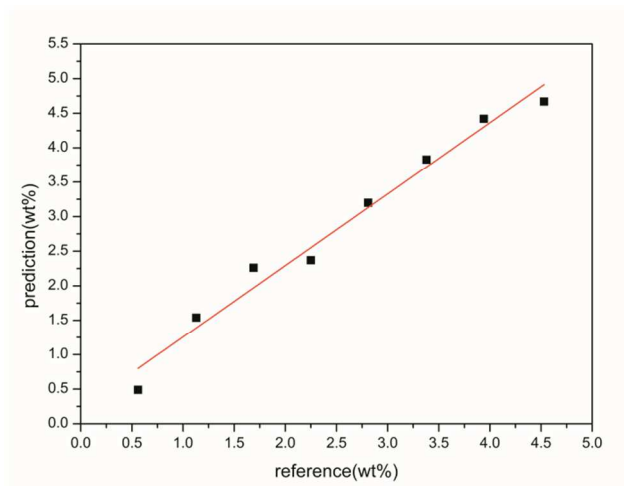


Fig. 7. Relationship of the predictive values with the reference values for the water of crystallization content. The straight line is obtained by linear regression.

#### 4 Conclusion

Near infrared spectroscopy is a promising technique as it is a rapid and non-destructive method. The result of the study shows that the NIR model for the water of crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum can be used to detect the rocks of Yungang Grottoes in situ. In the archaeological site, the spectra of the actual samples can be recorded by the portable FTNIR spectrometer. Then the water of crystallization content of dihydrate gypsum can be obtained by importing the NIR spectroscopy into the NIR model. Therefore, the determination of the water of crystallization will only need the portable FTNIR instrument and a laptop in the future. It may be proved to be a valid,

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4 simple and fast tool to reduce analytical cost. The water of crystallization  
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7 content obtained by the NIR model can be applied to evaluate the degree of  
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10 weathering of rocks. Based on the above work, the protection and restoration  
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12 of Yungang Grottoes can be carried out.  
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### 14 **Acknowledgments**

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24 Support Program (2009BAK53B01).  
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