



Analysis of the red and green optical absorption spectrum of gas phase ammonia

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ABSTRACT

Room temperature NH₃ absorption spectra recorded at the Kitt Peak National Solar Observatory in 1980 are analyzed. The spectra cover two regions in the visible: 15,200 – 15,700 cm⁻¹ and 17,950 – 18,250 cm⁻¹. These high overtone rotation-vibration spectra are analyzed using both combination differences and variational line lists. Two variational line lists were computed using the TROVE nuclear motion program: one is based on an *ab initio* potential energy surface (PES) while the other used a semi-empirical PES. *Ab initio* dipole moment surfaces are used in both cases. 95 energy levels with $J = 1 - 7$ are determined from analysis of the experimental spectrum in the $5\nu_{\text{NH}}$ (red) region and 46 for $6\nu_{\text{NH}}$ (green) region. These levels span four vibrational bands in each of the two regions, associated with stretching overtones.

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1. Introduction

There are a number of reasons why one might attempt to analyse the high resolution optical ro-vibrational spectrum of ammonia. Firstly, the spectrum of ammonia is a textbook example of high resolution molecular spectroscopy. However, for almost 70 years, the vibration-rotation spectrum of ¹⁴NH₃ was only studied in detail at wavelengths longer than 2 μm; these spectra are assembled in comprehensive high resolution molecular spectroscopic databases such as the 2008 edition of HITRAN [1]. Only relatively recently and rather gradually has the absorption spectrum of NH₃ been successfully analyzed in the near infrared region [2–8]; some of these data are included in the recent, 2016, release of HITRAN [9]. The spectrum of ammonia at visible wavelengths remains poorly characterized and, at best, only partially analyzed. A full review of high resolution, vibration-rotation studies of ¹⁴NH₃ was recently provided by Al Derzi et al. [10] as part of their MARVEL (measured active rotation-vibration energy levels) study of the molecule.

Secondly, there is renewed interest in the spectrum of ammonia caused by attempts to analyze spectra of brown dwarfs [11], and in particular the fact that the coldest of these object, Y-dwarfs, should be characterized by strong ammonia features [12,13], but possibly are not. Nonetheless, detailed ammonia spectra have been assigned in brown dwarfs [11]. The discovery of the exoplanets, and especially the use of the transit method to observe molecular spectra [14], has led to discussions on the presence of ammonia in these objects too [15,16]. Water and methane are essential to the characterization of exoplanetary spectra. However, ammonia may be a “mind-marker” as ammonia is the most-manufactured molecule on Earth and is also a major byproduct of intensive agriculture, and hence a possible sign of intelligent life. Ammonia is among a number of molecules being actively discussed as a possible bio-marker [17,18]. Ammonia has recently been detected in the atmosphere of a hot Jupiter exoplanet [19].

Thirdly, the umbrella motion in NH₃ is a classic example of a molecule undergoing a large amplitude motion. The effect of this motion on the energy levels in the system has been the subject of recent careful analysis [20]. However, the corresponding energy levels for higher states remain unknown. The spectrum of ammonia remains hard to calculate accurately and to analyse [21] due to

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Table 1

Calculated vibrational band centers and band intensities using our two different PESs and our most reliable DMS. Units of intensity are $\text{cm}^{-1}/(\text{molecules cm}^{-2})$ and units of frequency are cm^{-1} .

Symmetry	$(\nu_1 \nu_2 \nu_3 \nu_4 \nu_5 \nu_6 \nu_7 \nu_8 \nu_9 \nu_{10})$	ν_0^{ai}	I_0^{ai}	ν_0^{ref}	I_0^{ref}
A_1^+	5 0 0 0 0 0 s	15,463.3924	2.412×10^{-22}	15,445.9471	2.686×10^{-22}
A_2^+	5 0 0 0 0 0 a	15,461.3950	1.039×10^{-22}	15,447.2406	2.512×10^{-22}
E^-	4 0 1 1 0 0 a	15,463.5532	6.454×10^{-23}	15,445.5068	6.731×10^{-23}
E^+	4 0 1 1 0 0 s	15,462.4164	7.176×10^{-23}	15,446.9127	5.780×10^{-23}
A_1^-	6 0 0 0 0 0 s	18,131.8294	8.271×10^{-23}	18,106.5124	6.338×10^{-23}
A_2^-	6 0 0 0 0 0 a	18,144.9957	6.855×10^{-23}	18,118.3103	4.262×10^{-23}
E^-	5 0 1 1 0 0 a	18,132.3858	3.907×10^{-23}	18,106.7462	1.568×10^{-23}
E^+	5 0 1 1 0 0 s	18,145.0979	3.540×10^{-23}	18,118.3656	9.478×10^{-24}

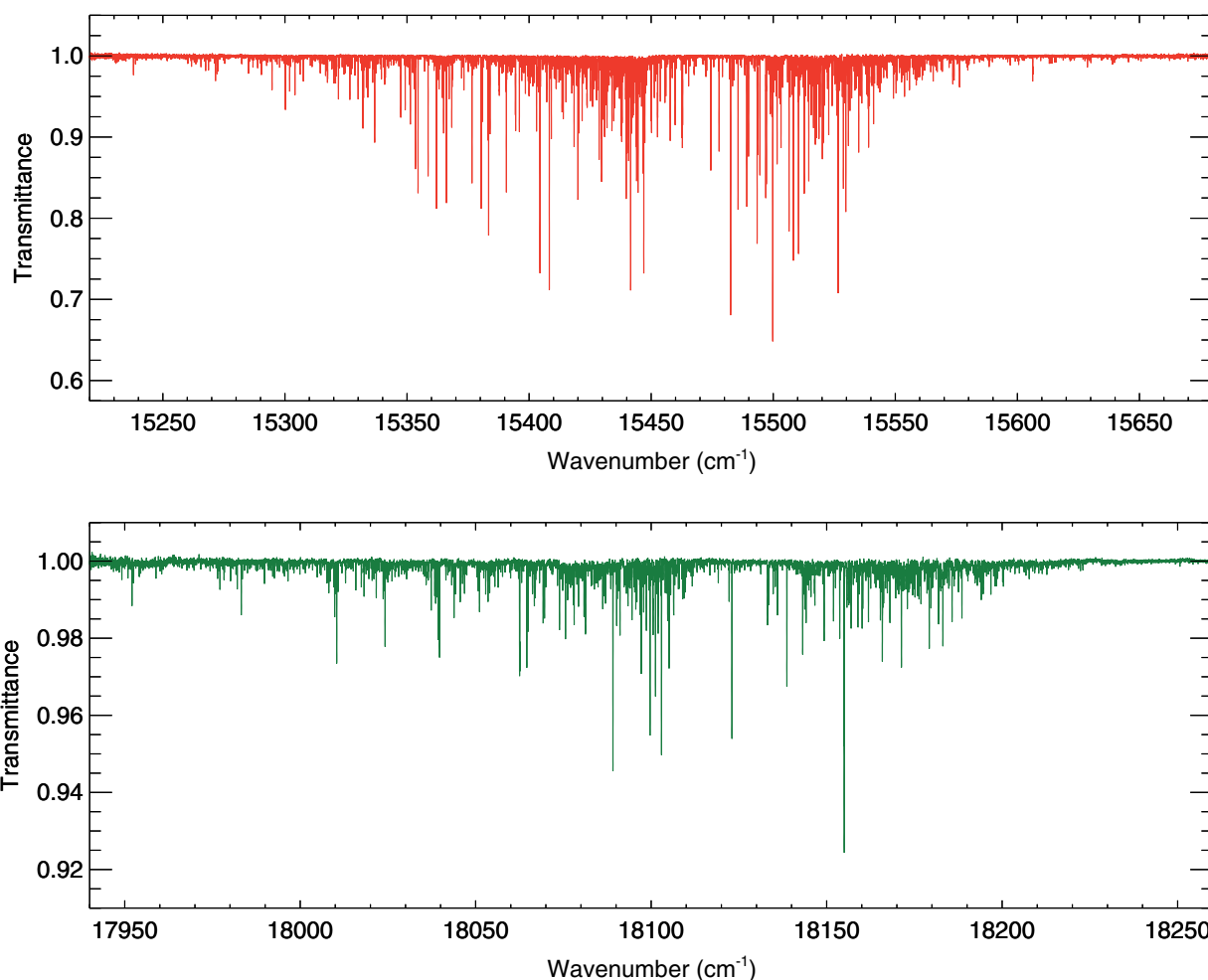


Fig. 1. Overview transmission spectra calculated from the Kitt Peak Fourier transform spectra 800406R0.007 (upper) and 800407R0.001 (lower).

this unusual umbrella motion. This is especially true for states of high vibrational excitation such as those found in its visible spectrum.

Finally, transitions at visible wavelengths provide a pathway to the study of the spectrum of ammonia up to and beyond dissociation. For the isoelectronic water molecule, the use of multiple-resonance visible-wavelength spectra has provided a direct route to dissociation [22] and beyond [23].

In fact, visible wavelength spectra have been available for some time. Ammonia lines in this region were observed at Kitt Peak in 1980, but remained unanalyzed; see next section. This work was directly followed by dye laser experiments by Kuga et al. [24] and microwave-detected microwave-optical double resonance studies by Coy and Lehmann [25–27]. About 1000 ammonia transitions in the $15,260 - 15,590 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ region were measured by Kuga et al.

[24] using Stark modulation with 193 of them being given rotational assignments. Coy and Lehmann [25] recorded visible ammonia spectra around $15,450$ and $18,110 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ with both photoacoustic absorption and microwave-optical double resonance spectra techniques. Again rotational assignments, only, were given for 318 and 105 lines respectively in the two regions. These partial (rotational) assignments do not supply information on the upper vibrational state. It is only very recently, with the advent of high quality *ab initio* studies, that vibrational assignments have begun to emerge e.g. [28].

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a description of the Kitt Peak observation of ammonia in the optical region. Section 3 presents our analysis of this spectrum and Section 4 compares the results with those of previous studies. Conclusions are made in Section 5.

Table 2

Observed ammonia energy levels, in cm^{-1} , in the $5\nu_{\text{NH}}$ region; also given are the calculated values with both the *ab initio* (ai) and refined (ref) PESs, the observed minus calculated (o-c) residues and error in the combination difference (CD).

<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>	calc. ai	obs.	o-c	CD	calc.ref	o-c
5 0 0 0 0 0 A'_1 s							
1	1	15,478.3353	15,466.5198	-11.82	0.0015	15,461.5691	4.95
3	0	15,573.5648	15,561.9812	-11.58	-0.0012	15,556.3977	5.58
3	3	15,545.9218	15,533.4884	-12.43	-0.0008	15,528.5446	4.94
4	2	15,633.3132	15,621.4179	-11.90	-0.0003		
4	3	15,618.7333	15,605.8568	-12.88	0.0006	15,601.5825	4.27
5	3	15,710.0286	15,697.4938	-12.53	0.0030	15,692.9553	4.54
6	3	15,818.4972	15,806.3031	-12.19	0.0062	15,801.6672	4.63
7	6	15,865.8936	15,853.4710	-12.42	-0.0001	15,848.2242	5.25
4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s							
1	0	15,481.8660	15,469.9316	-11.93	-0.0012	15,463.9325	6.00
1	1	15,478.9618	15,466.4888	-12.47	-0.0012	15,461.0864	5.40
2	0	15,518.6451	15,506.0918	-12.55	0.0004		
2	1	15,514.5842	15,502.4293	-12.15	-0.0003	15,496.5855	5.84
2	1	15,516.3664	15,502.9113	-13.46	0.0047	15,496.6968	6.21
2	2	15,505.9747	15,494.0029	-11.97	0.0006	15,488.2554	5.75
2	2	15,506.1888	15,494.1377	-12.05			
3	0	15,574.1047	15,562.1522	-11.95	-0.0008	15,555.8965	6.26
3	1	15,572.2321	15,563.0706	-9.16	-0.0046	15,551.0073	12.06
3	1	15,572.4357	15,560.8323	-11.60		15,554.3331	6.50
3	2	15,560.6454	15,548.7502	-11.90	-0.0015	15,542.8740	5.88
3	2	15,561.1995	15,549.4616	-11.74	-0.0019	15,543.0635	6.40
3	3	15,544.8852	15,533.9636	-10.92	0.0000	15,527.7201	6.24
3	3	15,546.0406	15,533.9637	-12.08	0.0000	15,527.9310	6.03
4	1	15,640.8673	15,627.6109	-13.26	-0.0001	15,623.1372	4.47
4	2	15,634.6141	15,622.2864	-12.33	0.0003	15,615.6958	6.59
4	2	15,634.7014	15,623.1377	-11.56	-0.0007	15,616.7113	6.43
4	3	15,619.3581	15,607.5985	-11.76	-0.0006	15,601.0887	6.51
4	3	15,619.1095	15,606.9873	-12.12	0.0013	15,601.1311	5.86
4	4	15,597.5857	15,585.6611	-11.92	0.0006	15,579.9239	5.74
4	4	15,597.8406	15,588.6857	-9.15	-0.0040	15,575.7678	12.92
5	0	15,740.7703	15,727.8952	-12.88	0.0001	15,722.4298	5.47
5	1	15,739.9982	15,726.3129	-13.69		15,722.0249	4.29
5	2	15,723.6043	15,709.8891	-13.72	0.0017	15,705.7193	4.17
5	3	15,709.8405	15,697.9178	-11.92	0.0059	15,692.1836	5.73
5	4	15,689.1987	15,677.2516	-11.95	-0.0013		
5	4	15,689.5117	15,678.0245	-11.49	0.0002		
5	5	15,661.6004	15,649.7260	-11.87	-0.0015	15,644.0356	5.69
5	5	15,661.8454	15,649.7205	-12.12	-0.0044		
6	1	15,839.8586	15,825.9434	-13.92	0.0028	15,822.1480	3.80
6	2	15,836.1023	15,823.5558	-12.55	-0.0002	15,818.3883	5.17
6	4	15,798.8243	15,783.9469	-14.88	0.0074		
6	5	15,771.3477	15,759.1135	-12.23	-0.0001	15,753.7410	5.37
6	5	15,771.4733	15,759.2062	-12.27	0.0006	15,753.9483	5.26
6	6	15,737.6585	15,725.3892	-12.27	0.0025	15,719.1815	6.21
6	6	15,737.9054	15,725.6116	-12.29	-0.0011	15,720.1091	5.50
7	4	15,926.0570	15,913.8181	-12.24	-0.0044	15,908.4322	5.39
7	5	15,899.3692	15,886.8414	-12.53	-0.0036	15,882.3011	4.54
7	7	15,825.4482	15,813.2774	-12.17	0.0093	15,808.0481	5.23
7	7	15,826.4303	15,813.2773	-13.15	0.0093		
5 0 0 0 0 0 A''_2 a							
2	0	15,517.0588	15,502.4293	-14.63	-0.0003	15,502.2533	0.18
3	3	15,544.4086	15,530.4653	-13.94	0.0013	15,529.8940	0.57
4	0	15,646.1915	15,633.7890	-12.40	0.0006	15,631.2144	2.57
4	3	15,617.4028	15,601.4186	-15.98	-0.0006	15,602.8596	-1.44
5	3	15,708.2297	15,694.0690	-14.16	0.0019	15,693.6011	0.47
6	3	15,817.6447	15,804.6638	-12.98	0.0000	15,801.5010	3.16
6	6	15,736.4654	15,723.6854	-12.78	0.0084		
7	3	15,943.1415	15,928.5263	-14.62	-0.0046	15,928.3130	0.21
4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a							
1	0	15,480.7408	15,466.9949	-13.75	0.0053	15,465.2181	1.78
1	1	15,477.3769	15,463.4543	-13.92	0.0052	15,461.8168	1.64
2	0	15,517.4444	15,503.8631	-13.58	0.0002	15,501.6522	2.21
2	1	15,515.2109	15,500.1851	-15.03			
2	1	15,515.0942	15,501.2087	-13.89	-0.0009	15,496.6968	4.51
2	2	15,504.9696	15,491.3928	-13.58	0.0022	15,489.3425	2.05
2	2	15,505.2649	15,491.3928	-13.87	0.0008	15,485.4882	5.90
3	0	15,572.6798	15,560.0324	-12.65	0.0000	15,556.9058	3.13
3	1	15,567.3094	15,553.8064	-13.50	-0.0007	15,551.0073	2.80
3	2	15,559.7436	15,546.4812	-13.84	0.0003	15,543.0635	3.42
3	2	15,559.9225	15,546.5713	-13.35	0.0009		
3	2	15,560.3182	15,546.4812	-13.84	0.0003	15,540.7744	5.71
3	3	15,544.7225	15,531.1917	-13.53	-0.0007	15,529.1457	2.05
4	0	15,646.5022	15,631.1398	-15.36	0.0016	15,630.9364	0.20

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>	calc. ai	obs.	o-c	CD	calc.ref	o-c
4	1	15,639.2451	15,625.0227	−14.22	−0.0022	15,624.0756	0.95
4	1	15,645.3214	15,630.2131	−15.11	0.0014		
4	2	15,631.8889	15,618.6802	−13.21	0.0010	15,615.6958	2.98
4	2	15,633.0966	15,619.2053	−13.89	0.0025		
4	3	15,617.7110	15,603.9518	−13.76	−0.0011	15,601.1311	2.82
4	3	15,617.7948	15,607.7478	−10.05	0.0062	15,601.9253	5.82
4	4	15,596.4500	15,583.5915	−12.86	−0.0010	15,581.0460	2.55
5	0	15,738.9750	15,724.3296	−14.65	−0.0096	15,722.7391	1.59
5	1	15,729.6859	15,717.0764	−12.61	0.0017	15,721.2442	−4.17
5	3	15,708.5130	15,696.0748	−12.44	−0.0017	15,693.0882	2.99
5	3	15,708.9455	15,694.7899	−14.16	0.0001	15,692.4417	2.35
5	4	15,687.7743	15,674.3339	−13.44	0.0004	15,672.2831	2.05
5	4	15,687.8374	15,674.3682	−13.47	−0.0046		
5	5	15,660.5921	15,646.6242	−13.97	−0.0043	15,644.0356	2.59
5	5	15,660.6026	15,646.4553	−14.15	−0.0021	15,644.2257	2.23
6	1	15,850.0131	15,836.8953	−13.12	0.0026	15,830.1096	6.79
6	2	15,829.5421	15,815.1499	−14.39	−0.0019	15,813.9548	1.20
6	4	15,796.8984	15,782.4646	−14.43	0.0025	15,780.8148	1.65
6	5	15,769.8239	15,756.1173	−13.71	−0.0045	15,753.9951	2.12
6	5	15,770.0171	15,759.2062	−10.81	0.0006	15,753.7410	5.47
6	6	15,737.0255	15,721.9501	−15.08	−0.0047	15,720.1091	1.84
7	1	15,964.6886	15,950.3221	−14.37	0.0052	15,963.2702	−12.95
7	2	15,962.1867	15,947.3398	−14.85	−0.0041	15,946.6881	0.65
7	4	15,924.0102	15,910.2483	−13.76	−0.0030	15,903.9761	6.27
7	6	15,864.3182	15,851.2255	−13.09	−0.0007	15,849.0868	2.14
7	7	15,824.9631	15,810.9749	−13.99	−0.0047	15,808.7132	2.26

2. Experimental observation of ammonia spectra

The two ammonia spectra were recorded with the McMath-Pierce Fourier transform spectrometer (FTS) of the National Solar Observatory at Kitt Peak. The red spectrum centered at 647 nm was recorded on April 6, 1980 by C. de Bergh, R. Hubbard and J. Brault (800406R0.007 in the archive). The ammonia sample was held in a White-type multireflection cell with a base path length of 6 m. The cell was set for 72 passes (432 m total path length) and the sample had a pressure of 7.8 Torr at room temperature (20.6 °C). The FTS used the Visible beamsplitter (fused silica with a silver coating), silicon photodiode detectors and a quartz halogen lamp as a light source. The optical bandpass was set to 15200–15700 cm^{−1} with an OG570 color filter and a tilted Corion 660 nm bandpass filter. Forty scans were co-added in 5 h of integration at a resolution of 0.024 cm^{−1}.

The green spectrum centered at 551 nm was recorded on April 7, 1980 by C. de Bergh, J. Brault and D. Jennings (800407R0.001 in the archive) with a similar experimental arrangement. The sample had a pressure of 10.88 Torr at room temperature (21.5 °C). The optical bandpass was set to 17950–18250 cm^{−1} with a tilted Corion 560 nm bandpass filter. Thirty-six scans were co-added in 4.5 h of integration at a resolution of 0.034 cm^{−1}.

The spectra are shown in Fig. 1; they were analyzed by creating a baseline and calculating transmission spectra. The spectra were fitted to create line lists containing the line position and an arbitrary intensity for each feature. The line positions were calibrated (using HITRAN [29]) based on water absorption lines in two lower spectral regions recorded in the same run under similar conditions, and the same calibration factor has been applied to all line lists. The line lists are given as supplementary data to this paper.

3. Spectral analysis

The ammonia absorption spectra were recorded at room temperature in the 15,200 – 15,700 cm^{−1} and 17,950 – 18,250 cm^{−1} regions. These regions are the ones with the strongest ammonia absorption; the strongest lines belong to pure stretching overtone excitations of ν_1 and ν_3 .

At $T = 296$ K, our spectrum in the 15,000 cm^{−1} region contains 1069 lines stronger than 5×10^{-26} cm/molecule and 550 lines in the 18,000 cm^{−1} region stronger than 10^{-26} cm/molecule. Analysis of the spectra was based on two variational line lists. The two line lists differ in the potential energy surface (PES) employed: *ab initio* [28] and semi-empirical [30], but used the same *ab initio* dipole moment surface (DMS) [31] in both cases. The resulting differences in calculated band centers and band intensities are shown in Table 1, where we have used a DMS specifically produced to be accurate at high frequencies. Both the DMS used in the assignments, and that used to calculate band intensities will be discussed elsewhere [30]. Spectra were calculated using the variational nuclear motion program TROVE [32,33], which has been especially adapted to treat ammonia [34].

234 and 107 lines are assigned in the respective regions, mostly using the method of combination differences. The six strongest lines in 15,000 cm^{−1} region were assigned by direct comparison with the variational line list on the basis of comparing theoretical and experimental frequencies and intensities. These assignments lead to determination of 95 and 46 energy levels in $5\nu_{\text{NH}}$ and $6\nu_{\text{NH}}$ regions, respectively. Our line list predicts a line about every 0.1 cm^{−1}, but the standard deviation of differences between observed frequencies and experimental levels is only 0.003 cm^{−1} for the $5\nu_{\text{NH}}$ and 0.006 cm^{−1} for the $6\nu_{\text{NH}}$ regions, which means that combination differences provides a reliable means of identifying transitions.

Table 2 presents the experimentally-derived energy levels for $\nu_{\text{NH}} = 5$ states of ¹⁴NH₃, together with their rotational quantum number *J* and *K* assignment. The vibrational assignments are taken from the TROVE line lists. Vibrational assignments use standard normal-mode style quantum numbers [35]. While they were informed by the quantum numbers provided by TROVE, which uses its own convention, they were largely determined by energy values and symmetry.

The difference between combination differences derived from the experimental lines of this work and the known ground states presented in the MARVEL database [10] is usually less than 0.001 cm^{−1}. This practically excludes the possibility of fortuitous coincidences and confirms the various assignments. The assigned

Table 3

Observed ammonia energy levels, in cm^{-1} , in the $6\nu_{\text{NH}}$ region also given are the calculated values with both the *ab initio* (ai) and refined (ref) PESs, the observed minus calculated (o-c) residues and error in the combination difference (CD).

<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>	calc. ai	obs.	o-c	CD	calc.ref	o-c
6 0 0 0 0 0 A'_1 s							
1	0	18,150.23	18,122.9443	-27.29	0.0049	18,125.3154	-2.37
2	2	18,174.19	18,148.2950	-25.90	0.0002	18,149.5133	-1.22
3	0	18,242.65	18,216.6530	-26.00	0.0007	18,218.0140	-1.36
3	2	18,229.49	18,202.5104	-26.98	0.0090	18,205.4781	-2.97
3	3	18,213.58	18,187.1485	-26.43	0.0090	18,189.0091	-1.86
3	3	18,214.51	18,185.2380	-29.28	0.0100	18,189.3351	-4.10
4	3	18,287.87	18,262.2755	-25.59	0.0050		
6	6	18,407.08	18,382.0507	-25.03	0.0097	18,381.8783	0.17
5 0 1 1 0 0 E' s							
2	1	18,184.35	18,158.5039	-25.85	0.0002	18,159.1471	-0.64
3	1	18,240.38	18,216.3554	-24.03	0.0102		
3	2	18,229.36	18,203.8817	-25.49	0.0080	18,204.9315	-1.05
3	3	18,214.47	18,190.2721	-24.21	0.0021	18,188.5726	-1.70
4	1	18,308.95	18,281.0925	-27.86	0.0016	18,284.2971	-3.20
4	4	18,266.42	18,239.5275	-26.90	0.0065	18,240.9899	-1.46
5	4	18,358.66	18,336.4739	-22.19	0.0010	18,333.4767	3.00
5	5	18,331.34	18,308.2101	-23.13	0.0061		
6	5	18,441.80	18,419.7385	-22.07	0.0078	18,416.3563	3.38
6	6	18,407.70	18,381.9761	-25.73	0.0045	18,381.1558	0.82
6 0 0 0 0 0 A''_2 a							
2	0	18,200.04	18,174.5032	-25.54	0.0074	18,172.9909	1.51
3	2	18,243.85	18,216.6809	-27.18	0.0021	18,218.1875	-1.50
3	3	18,226.94	18,198.4299	-28.51	0.0064	18,200.5128	-2.08
4	0	18,329.36	18,303.4852	-25.88	0.0075	18,303.4155	0.07
5 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a							
1	1	18,140.65	18,115.9028	-24.76	0.0078	18,116.3720	-0.47
2	0	18,180.53	18,152.2634	-28.27	0.0109	18,156.2881	-4.02
2	0	18,200.14	18,179.6675	-20.48	0.0061		
2	1	18,179.29	18,157.5306	-21.76	0.0024		
2	2	18,187.98	18,164.4116	-23.57	0.0011		
3	0	18,255.15	18,230.2401	-24.91	0.0074	18,229.5317	0.71
3	1	18,234.98	18,209.6301	-25.35	0.0033	18,209.6730	-0.04
3	2	18,242.93	18,215.8869	-27.05	0.0106		
3	2	18,243.76	18,216.7658	-27.00	0.0034		
3	3	18,226.75	18,200.4632	-26.29	0.0099		
4	0	18,329.30	18,300.2546	-29.05	0.0053		
4	1	18,311.25	18,286.2913	-24.97	0.0084	18,286.6713	-0.38
4	2	18,301.21	18,275.2713	-25.95	0.0040	18,274.3152	0.96
4	2	18,317.32	18,290.4768	-26.85	0.0010	18,293.0889	-2.61
4	3	18,302.79	18,277.2233	-25.58	0.0061		
4	4	18,259.61	18,237.3512	-22.26	0.0003	18,238.2487	-0.90
4	4	18,259.96	18,232.3751	-27.59	0.0126		
5	1	18,416.37	18,393.2933	-23.08	0.0083		
5	4	18,352.29	18,322.8273	-29.47	0.0020	18,330.1106	-7.28
5	5	18,324.25	18,302.6365	-21.62	0.0117	18,303.0127	-0.38
5	5	18,344.33	18,316.0527	-28.28	0.0027	18,307.5629	8.49
6	4	18,481.50	18,450.9003	-30.61	0.0075		
6	6	18,400.89	18,373.0528	-27.84	0.0100	18,380.3334	-7.28
6	6	18,421.47	18,394.4531	-27.02	0.0104		

lines confirmed by combination differences and the corresponding experimentally-derived energy levels opens the way to assigning further lines without confirmation via combination differences. The observed minus calculated residuals given in the Tables 2 and 3 show that the discrepancy between calculated and experimentally derived levels is large but stable. This information can be used for assignment of the higher *J* and *K* lines in the future using the method of branches [36].

4. Comparison with previous work

Both Kuga et al. [24] and Coy and Lehmann [25–27] measured ammonia spectra at visible wavelengths. However only Coy and Lehmann published some of their actual line data and we compare with these below. In both cases the two sets of experimental wavenumbers are in good agreement. Coy and Lehmann give rotational assignments but did not attempt vibrational assignments. Our study gives full assignments which were obtained, as described above, independent of previously published results.

Table 4 compares the 42 lines presented by Coy and Lehmann [25] with our results. Our assignments suggest that Coy and Lehmann's spectra probed several upper vibrational states. However, there is good agreement between our rotational assignments and theirs: our assignments agree for 35 out of the 42 lines partially assigned by Coy and Lehmann. We have not assigned most of the other matching lines.

Table 5 compares our results with those of Coy and Lehmann [25] for the $18,000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ region. The agreement between the assignments is less good with our work only confirming 7 of the 14 rotational assignments given by Coy and Lehmann. For these assigned lines we are also able to provide vibrational assignments.

5. Conclusion

We have analyzed the room-temperature absorption spectrum of ammonia in red ($15,000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$) and green ($18,000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$) spectral regions recorded using a long pathlength FT spectrometer. Assignment of strong lines on these two regions is made up to $J = 7$.

Table 4

Comparison of this work with the results of Coy and Lehmann [25] for the 15 000 cm^{-1} region. Intensities, I , are absolute for Coy and Lehmann but are only relative (arbitrary units) for this work. $\Delta\tilde{\nu}$ is the wavenumber difference given as previous minus this work.

Coy and Lehmann			This work			Agree?	$\Delta\tilde{\nu}/\text{cm}^{-1}$
$\tilde{\nu}(\text{cm}^{-1})$	$I(\text{cm}^{-1}/\text{km-atm})$	assignment	$\tilde{\nu}(\text{cm}^{-1})$	I	assignment		
15,514.509	2.8	rR 30s	15,514.50598	0.165	rR 30s 5 0 0 0 0 0 A_2'' a	yes	0.003
15,512.652		rR 43s	15,512.64820	0.192	rR 43s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.004
15,512.502	3.53	qR 32s	15,512.49360	0.061		no	0.008
15,510.319	6.91	rQ 44s	15,510.31726	0.276	rR 44s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.002
15,508.332		qR 30s	15,508.32790	0.145	rR 30s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.004
15,508.203	5.49	rQ 43a	15,508.20078	0.292	rR 43a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.002
15,506.418	3.53	rR 44a	15,506.41581	0.245	rR 44a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.002
15,501.526	1.56	qR 20a	15,501.52301	0.155	qR 20a 5 0 0 0 0 0 A_1' s	yes	0.003
15,499.758	6.43	rR 33s	15,499.75429	0.422	rR 33s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.004
15,497.14		rR 33a	15,497.13562	0.176		no	0.004
15,496.89	5.60	rR 33a	15,496.88853	0.195	rR 33a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.001
15,494.49	1.94	rR 33a	15,494.48822	0.164		no	0.002
15,493.48		rR 21s	15,493.47776	0.134	rR 21s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.000
15,493.351	4.83	rR 20a	15,493.34820	0.275	rR 20a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.003
15,489.819	1.73	rR 21a	15,489.81697	0.130	rR 21a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.002
15,489.127	2.98	rR 22s	15,489.12250	0.210	rR 22s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.005
15,485.56	2.58	rR 22a	15,485.55930	0.214	rR 22a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.001
15,482.497	4.96	(q,r)R 10s	15,482.49427	0.389	rR 10s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.003
15,477.789	2.03	rR 11s	15,477.78477	0.130	rR 11s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.004
15,474.386	2.09	rR 11a	15,474.38434	0.158	rR 11a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.002
15,462.75		rR 00a	15,462.74593	0.122		no	0.004
15,462.618	3.96	rR 00a	15,462.61582	0.114	rR 00a 4 1 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.002
15,457.765	1.4	pQ 43s	15,457.76154	0.113	pQ 43s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.003
15,452.624		pQ 32a	15,452.62541	0.045		no	-0.001
15,452.55	2.8	pQ 43a	15,452.54721	0.093	pQ 43a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.003
15,450.11		unassigned	15,450.10805	0.094	qQ 21s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	new	0.002
15,449.989	2.86	pQ 11a	15,449.98649	0.083	pQ 11a 4 1 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.003
15,446.926	5.43	rQ 10s	15,446.92161	0.318	rQ 10s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.004
15,441.553	4.02	rQ 20a	15,441.54944	0.348	rQ 30s 4 0 1 1 0 0 A_1' s	no	0.004
15,429.657		rQ 40a	15,429.65465	0.169	pQ 51a 4 0 1 1 0 0 A_2' a	no	0.002
15,429.504	4.69	rQ 32s	15,429.49786	0.107	rQ 32s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.006
	and	qQ 53s	15,429.49786	0.107	qQ 53s 5 0 0 0 0 0 A_2' a	yes	
15,408.235	4.25	pP 33s	15,408.23118	0.336	pP 33s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.004
15,404.406	4.52	pP 33a	15,404.40490	0.310	pP 33a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.001
15,403.129		rP 20a	15,403.12551	0.029		no	0.003
15,402.996	2.24	rP 20a	15,402.99117	0.096	rP 20a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.005
15,390.66		pP 44a	15,390.65849	0.181	pP 44a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.002
15,390.514		unassigned					
15,390.514		(pP 31s?)	15,390.50993	0.047	pP 31s 5 0 0 0 0 0 A_1' s	yes	0.004
15,383.381	2.97	pP 43s	15,383.37574	0.255	pP 43s 4 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.005
15,380.35	4.4	pP 43a	15,380.34811	0.155	pP 43a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.002
15,376.555	2.65	pP 55a	15,376.55023	0.177	pP 55a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.005
15,354.47	2.41	pP 40a	15,354.46842	0.177	pP 40a 4 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.002

Table 5

Comparison of this work with the results of Coy and Lehmann [25] for the 18 000 cm^{-1} region. Intensities, I , are absolute for Coy and Lehmann but are only relative (arbitrary units) for this work. $\Delta\tilde{\nu}$ is the wavenumber difference given as previous minus this work.

Coy and Lehmann			This work			Agree?	$\Delta\tilde{\nu}/\text{cm}^{-1}$
$\tilde{\nu}(\text{cm}^{-1})$	$I(\text{cm}^{-1}/\text{km-atm})$	assignment	$\tilde{\nu}(\text{cm}^{-1})$	I	assignment		
18,171.239	0.53	qR 30 s	18,171.23895	0.027	qR 30s 5 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.000
18,154.944		rR 33 s	18,154.95901	0.062		no	-0.015
18,154.869	1.6	rR 33 a	18,154.87596	0.026	rR 22a 5 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	no	-0.007
18,153.669	0.3	rR 33 s	18,153.66587	0.022	rR 33s 5 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	0.003
18,143.119	0.53	qR 10 s	18,143.11963	0.027		no	-0.001
18,138.611	0.49	rR 10 s	18,138.61399	0.038	rR 10s 5 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	-0.003
18,122.959	0.59	rR 00 a	18,122.95826	0.054	rR 00a 5 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	0.001
18,105.057	0.46	qQ 33 s	18,105.05388	0.029	pP 43a 5 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	no	0.003
18,102.89		rQ 10 s	18,102.89173	0.059	rQ 10s 5 0 1 1 0 0 E' s	yes	-0.002
18,102.70	0.89	pQ 21 s	18,102.70777	0.008	qQ 22a 6 0 0 0 0 0 A_1' s	no	-0.004
18,101.18	0.56		18,101.18162	0.042		no	-0.001
18,100.60		qQ 32 s	18,100.59630	0.005		no	0.001
18,100.49			18,100.49069	0.015	qQ 33a 6 0 0 0 0 0 E' s	no	-0.006
18,100.4	0.52	qQ 44 s	18,100.40051	0.009		no	-0.001
18,099.62	0.82	rQ 20 s	18,099.61923	0.051	rQ 31a 5 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	no	0.001
18,089.05	1		18,089.05126	0.060		no	-0.001
18,075.534	0.46	rQ 43 a	18,075.53319	0.019		no	0.001
18,062.524		pP 33 a	18,062.52636	0.021		no	-0.002
18,062.524		rP 20 a	18,062.52636	0.021	qP 20a 6 0 0 0 0 0 E' s	yes	-0.002
18,062.447	0.95	pP 33 a	18,062.44688	0.022		no	0.000
18,010.338	0.42	rP 40 a	18,010.3395	0.030	rP 40a 5 0 1 1 0 0 E'' a	yes	-0.001

The majority of the remaining unassigned lines probably belong to states with higher rotational quantum numbers. The assignments were made using room-temperature ammonia line lists calculated with both an *ab initio* PES and a PES refined to experimental energy levels. An *ab initio* DMS has been used in the both line lists.

As the spectral region analysed in this work represents extrapolation to high energies from known ammonia spectra (the highest conventional FTS spectra of ammonia analysed as yet is in the 1 μm region [37]), quite large discrepancies between the observed and calculated energy levels are obtained. In particular, differences of 13 cm^{-1} for the 15,000 cm^{-1} region and about 25 cm^{-1} for 18,000 cm^{-1} region are found for our *ab initio* predictions. However this difference is largely due to use of a less well-converged basis set in the line list calculations. Significantly smaller discrepancies are observed for the better converged values of *ab initio* calculations presented previously [28].

Our assigned optical spectra of ammonia, which are given in the supplementary data, represent a significant expansion of the known spectral position of NH_3 lines. It provides a sound basis for the observation and analysis of the multiple resonance spectra of ammonia towards higher vibrational stretching states with $\nu_{\text{NH}} = 7, 8$ and higher up to dissociation. The way to this using two and three photon techniques has been demonstrated for water [38–40]. The highly excited stretching energy levels of water, derived from these papers, were used in the fit of the water PES to the experimental data. The resulting global water PES provided the means to compute the first complete water line list, which included every rovibrational bound state [41]. The present study of the optical spectrum of ammonia represents an important step towards the goal of calculating a complete line list for ammonia.

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Supplementary material

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.jqsrt.2018.02.001.

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