

Systematically improved melting point prediction: a detailed physical simulation model is required -

Supporting Information

Marie-Madeleine Walz and David Van der Spoel*

*Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, Uppsala University, Husargatan 3, Box 596,
SE-75124 Uppsala, Sweden*

E-mail: david.vanderspoel@icm.uu.se

Computational methods - Additional details

For determining the melting points we choose the so-called liquid-solid direct coexistence method using Molecular Dynamics (MD) simulations. Other applicable methods are e.g. free energy calculations or the Hamiltonian Gibbs-Duhem integration.^{1,2} These different methods were tested by Aragoes et al. on alkali halides, and shown to give consistent results. However, as observed by Zhang et al.³ for systems consisting of larger molecules, such as e.g. ionic liquids, direct methods can be inappropriate due to the slow dynamics of these molecules. Regarding the liquid-solid coexistence method, a starting configuration has to be set up where the solid crystal is in direct contact with its melt, where the z-axis was chosen to be perpendicular to the liquid-solid interface. In a next step the liquid-solid coexistence box is simulated using NPT simulations with semiisotropic pressure coupling at 1 bar at different temperatures. Depending on the temperature, the system evolves either to become a crystal or a melt. The different salts (boxes with 4000

*To whom correspondence should be addressed

ions) are simulated in a wide range of temperatures around the experimental melting point with a step size of 25 K, as the exact melting point given by the force field is not known. The force field's melting point is then determined by the average of the highest temperature where the salt is still a solid and the lowest temperature where the salt is a melt. In order to evaluate the final phase (i.e. solid or liquid) of the simulated salt boxes that were run for 5 ns at each temperature, both diffusion coefficients and radial distribution functions were evaluated for the last 100 ps (for figures see below). Using the diffusion coefficients it was determined whether the salt was liquid or solid (which was also confirmed visually at the phase transition temperature by looking at the final coordinate file), while the radial distribution function allowed us in addition to investigate the solid's crystallinity (i.e. whether the crystal structure was stable). For both the WBK and JC model it was observed that in certain cases (i.e. for some salts at a temperature close to the phase transition point) a box would be still partially solid and liquid at the same time after 5 ns of simulation, while 25 K higher or lower the simulation box was either completely liquid or solid. This indicates that this temperature is very close to the solid-liquid coexistence point, and that a complete conversion to either solid or liquid might take a significantly longer time than 5 ns or might even not be obtained (this would correspond to the case where the liquid and the solid phase have an equal chemical potential which defines the melting point).

The MD simulations were performed using the GROMACS simulation software (version 4.6.7), using tabulated Coulomb (coulomb-type: PME-User) and Van der Waals potentials (vdw-type: User) using tables with a spacing of 0.5 pm and double precision. The integration step size was 1 fs, and the cutoff length for the Coulomb and van der Waals interactions was equal to half of the box size at room temperature. A dispersion correction for energy and pressure was applied after the cutoff. For the polarisable force field, the convergence tolerance for the shell minimisation was set to 0.1 kJ/(mol nm).⁴ All simulations were performed using periodic boundary conditions. The results were obtained by running constant pressure simulations (NPT simulations) using the Berendsen semiisotropic pressure coupling (τ_P 10),⁵ and for the temperature coupling the velocity rescaling thermostat (τ_T 0.1).⁶

For the evaluation of the melting points of alkali halides with an fcc structure at high temperature (i.e. all alkali halides besides CsBr and CsI), we employed our polarisable force field (called WBK, Wang-Buckingham)⁷ and a non-polarisable force field (JC, Joung & Cheatham).⁸ Our results are compared to literature results from Aragonés et al.² that tested three force fields for NaCl (JC, Smith-Dang (SD),^{9,10} and Tosi-Fumi (TF¹¹)). The TF parameters were also applied for eleven alkali halides in total (LiF, LiCl, NaF, NaCl, NaBr, KF, KCl, KBr, RbF, RbCl and RbBr). Joung & Cheatham presented three sets of ion-specific parameters for the AHs, which are compatible with the water models TIP3P, TIP4P_{EW} and SPC/E. While Aragonés et al. tested the SPC/E-compatible set for NaCl, we choose here to test the TIP3P-compatible set. The different ion-specific parameters of JC and SD that are directly comparable as they use the same physical model and the same combining rules are summarised in Table Table S1.

Table S1: TIP3P- and SPC/E-compatible NaCl parameters from JC,⁸ and in addition the SD parameters.^{9,10}

Force field	Water model	Ion	σ (Å)	ϵ (kcal/mol)
JC	TIP3P	Na ⁺	2.439	0.0874393
JC	SPC/E	Na ⁺	2.160	0.3526418
SD	SPC/E	Na ⁺	2.350	0.1300
JC	TIP3P	Cl ⁻	4.478	0.0355910
JC	SPC/E	Cl ⁻	4.830	0.0127850
SD	SPC/E	Cl ⁻	4.400	0.1000

There are several differences that distinguish the applied force fields: (i) the WBK, JC and SD force field use ion-specific parameters, whereas the TF model uses salt-specific parameters; (ii) the WBK model is polarisable using a core-shell model, while the JC, SD and TF model are non-polarisable; (iii) the WBK model uses distributed charges, while the JC, SD and TF model use point charges; (iv) the van der Waals interactions are modelled differently: WBK uses a modified Buckingham potential that has no singularity and has in general a softer repulsive part,¹² JC and SD use a classical 12-6 Lennard-Jones (LJ) potential, and the TF model employs a Buckingham potential that is extended by a r^{-8} term. (v) JC and SD use the Lorentz-Berthelot combining rules, TF has no combining rules as the parameters are salt-specific, and WBK uses combining rules

introduced by Hogervorst.¹³

Melting point temperatures

The melting points for the WBK and JC (TIP3P) model were determined using the liquid-solid coexistence method. The simulations were run for 5 ns, and the diffusion coefficient was then evaluated for the whole simulation box for the last 100 ps of the simulation (see figures below). The phase of the simulation boxes was determined, i.e. to be either solid or liquid. Solid boxes have a diffusion coefficient that is equal to zero, while boxes that contain liquid have a value larger than zero. As mentioned above in certain cases the simulation box was still partially liquid and solid after a simulation time of 5 ns, indicating a temperature very close to the phase transition point. 25 K higher or lower than that, the simulation boxes were either completely liquid or solid (besides one single case, i.e. LiCl using the JC (TIP3P-compatible) model, where for three temperatures close to the phase transition point liquid-solid boxes were observed after 5 ns; at higher or lower temperatures the boxes were also completely solid or liquid after 5 ns of simulation). The melting point was determined by calculating the average between the highest temperature where the simulation box is completely solid and the lowest temperatures where the simulation box is completely liquid.

Table S2: Melting point temperatures in K. The error is estimated to be approx. 25 K for the WBK and JC (TIP3P) model. Experimental data is taken from the book Alkali Halides, A Handbook of Physical Properties (p. 70, ref b).¹⁴ The T_m values for TF, JC (SPC/E) and SD are taken from Aragonés et al.² The residual mean square deviation (RMSD) and the mean signed error (MSE) value are given. *Value taken from the text (in the table the value 1286 K is given.)

Salt	Experiment	WBK	JC (TIP3P)	TF ²	JC (SPC/E) ²	SD ²
LiF	1121.15	1155	1630	1010		
LiCl	883.15	1053	990	780		
LiBr	825.15	998	1060			
LiI	742.15	909	959			
NaF	1269.15	1178	1516	611		
NaCl	1074.15	1074	1324	1082	1285*	1327
NaBr	1020.15	1045	1270	1022		
NaI	933.15	971	1134			
KF	1131.15	1081	1368	859		
KCl	1044.15	1018	1230	1039		
KBr	1007.15	994	1207	1043		
KI	954.15	929	1129			
RbF	1106.15	1018	1343	996		
RbCl	988.15	991	1191	1092		
RbBr	955.15	953	1178	1047		
RbI	915.15	907	1107			
CsF	976.15	1005	1330			
CsCl	918.15	968	1155			
RMSD		79	250	226		
MSE		21	237	-93		

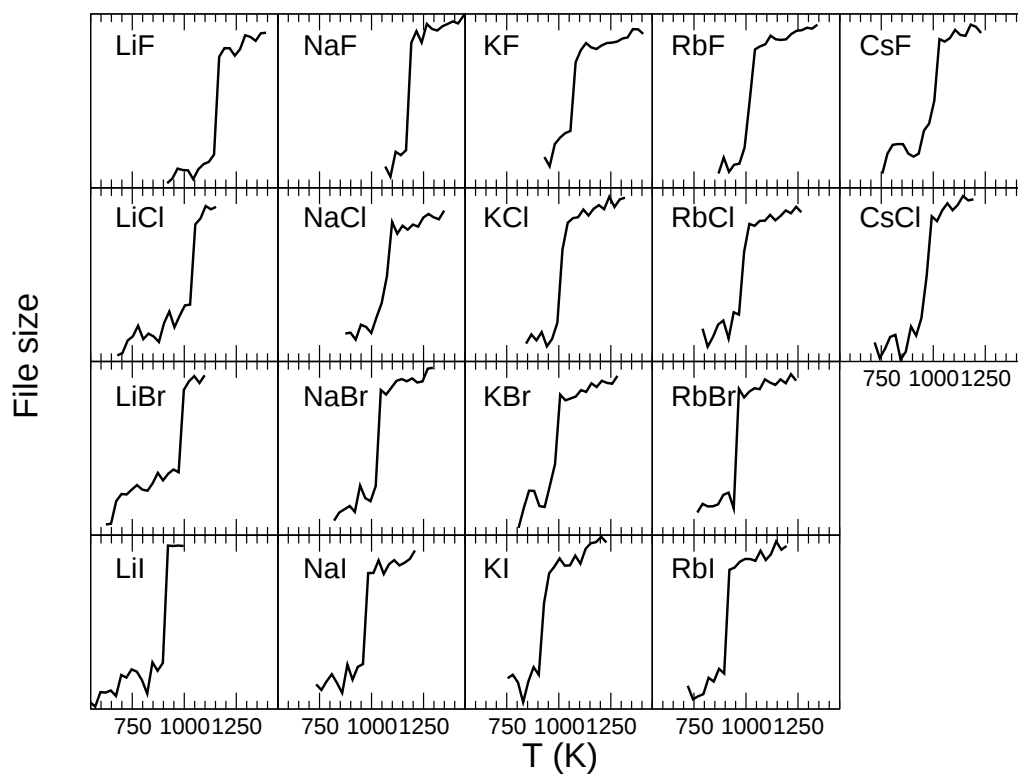
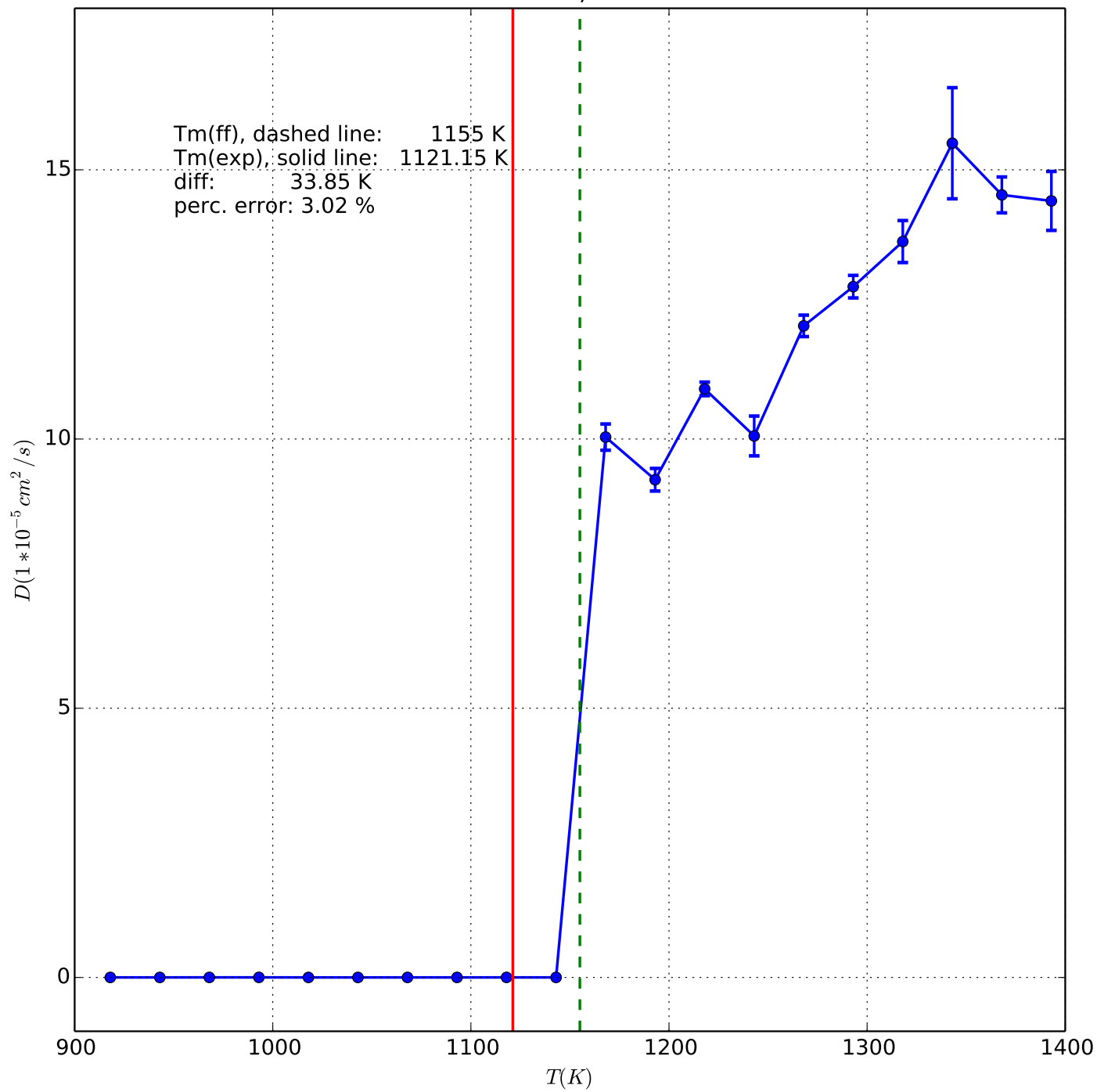


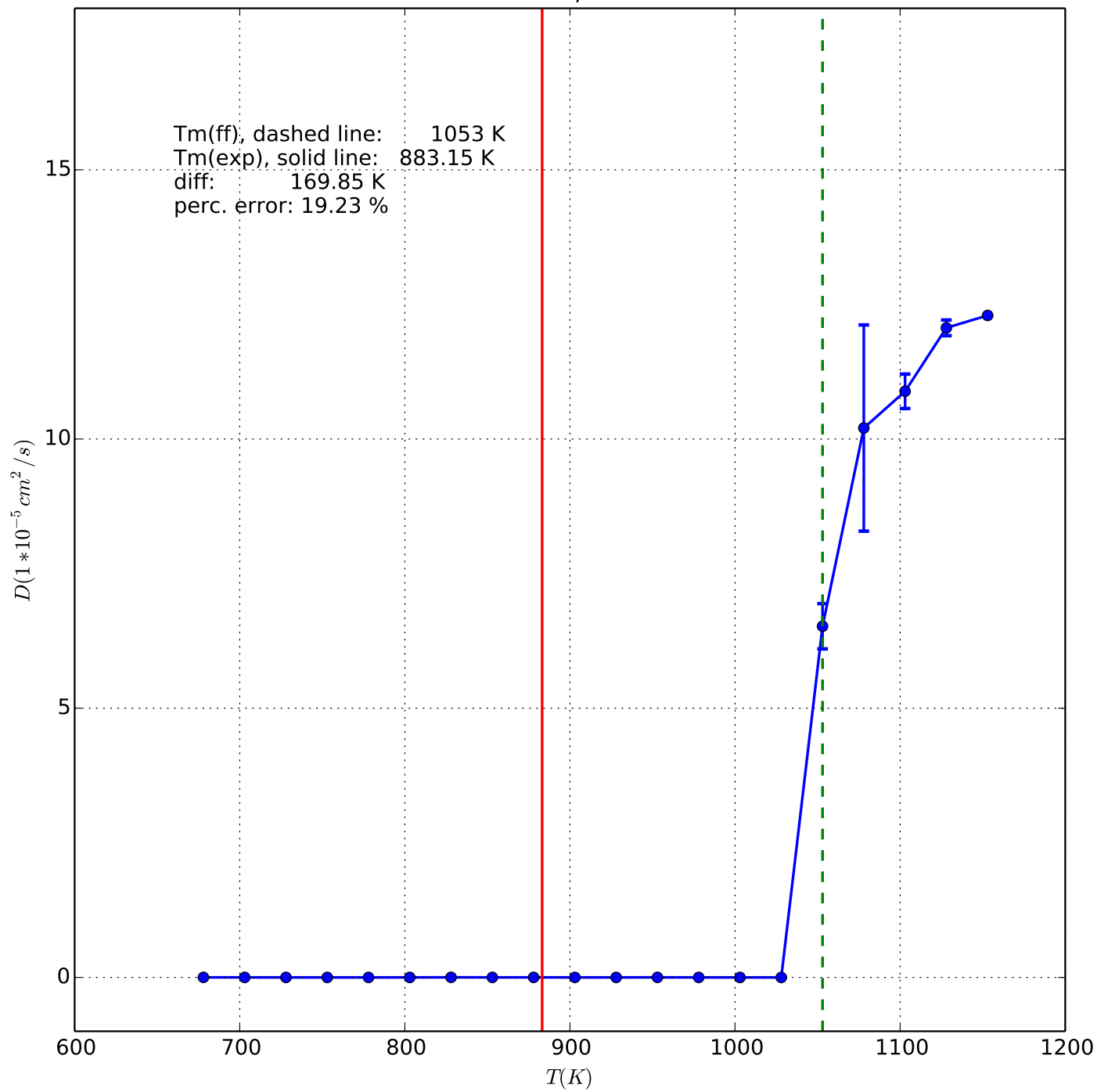
Figure S1: Filesize at the end of the co-existence simulations for the WBK force field for alkali-halides. The jump in file size indicates the melting point¹⁵ and the T_m correspond to those in Table Table S2.

Diffusion coefficients and radial distribution functions

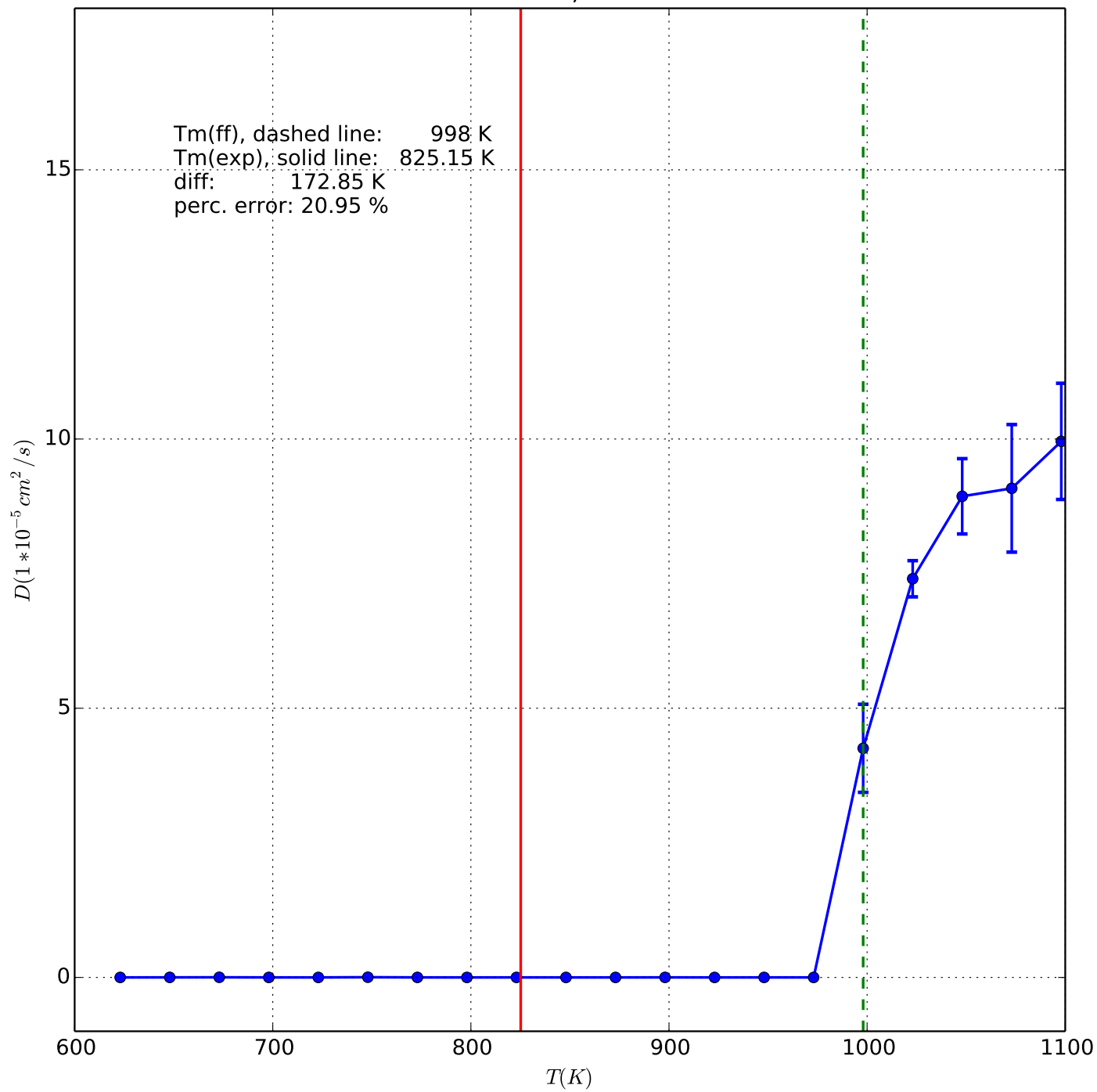
WBK,LiF



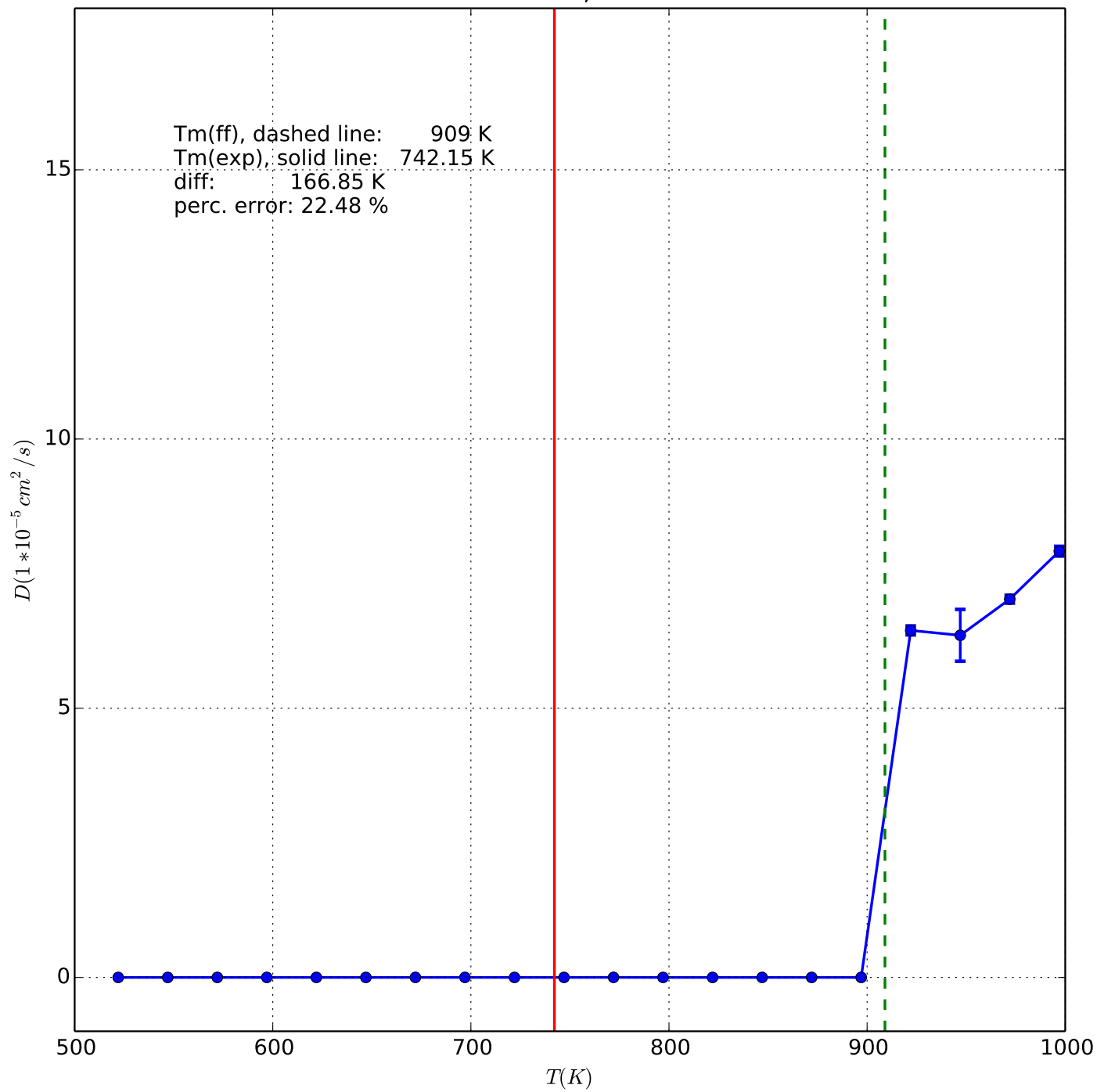
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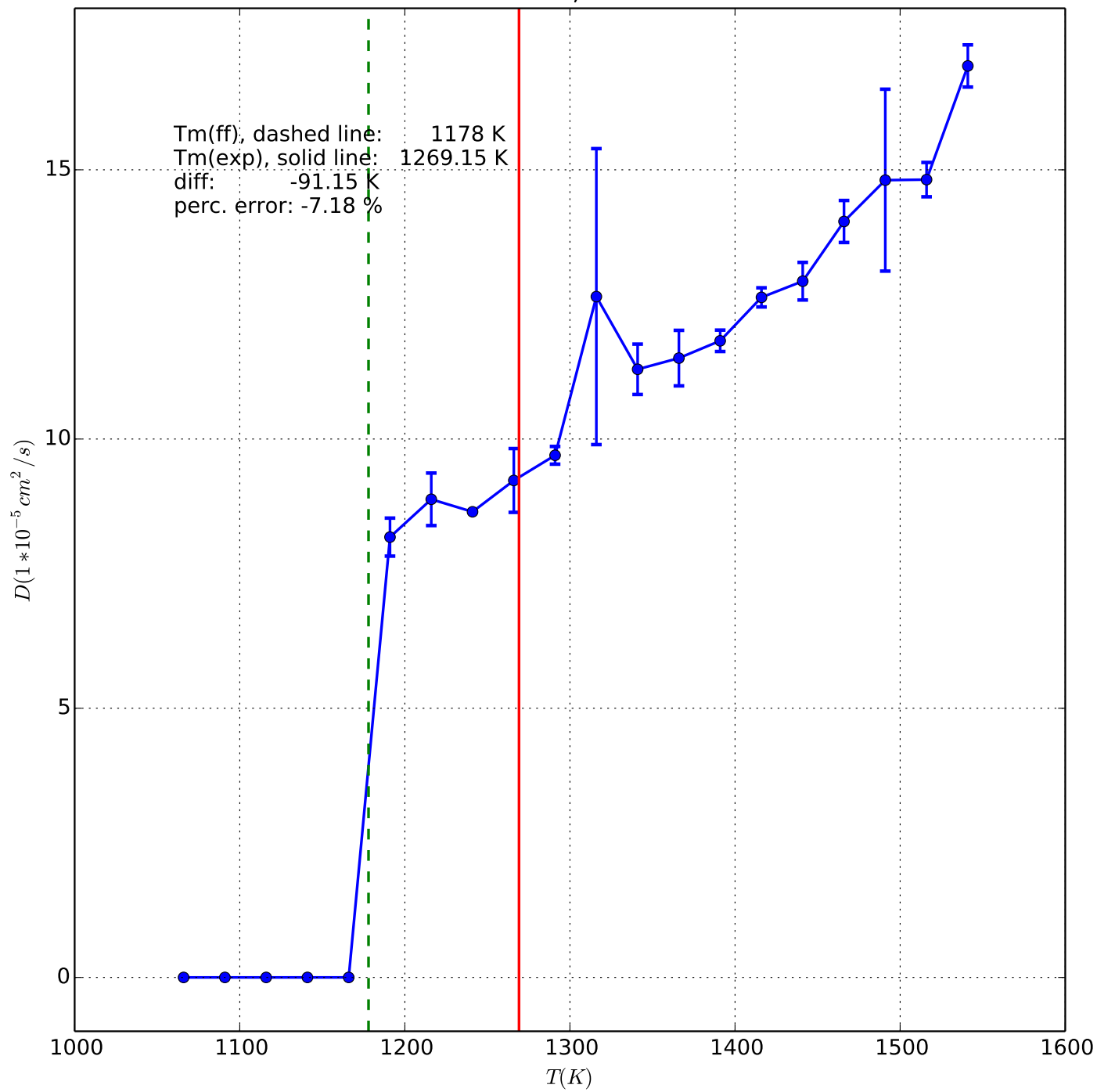
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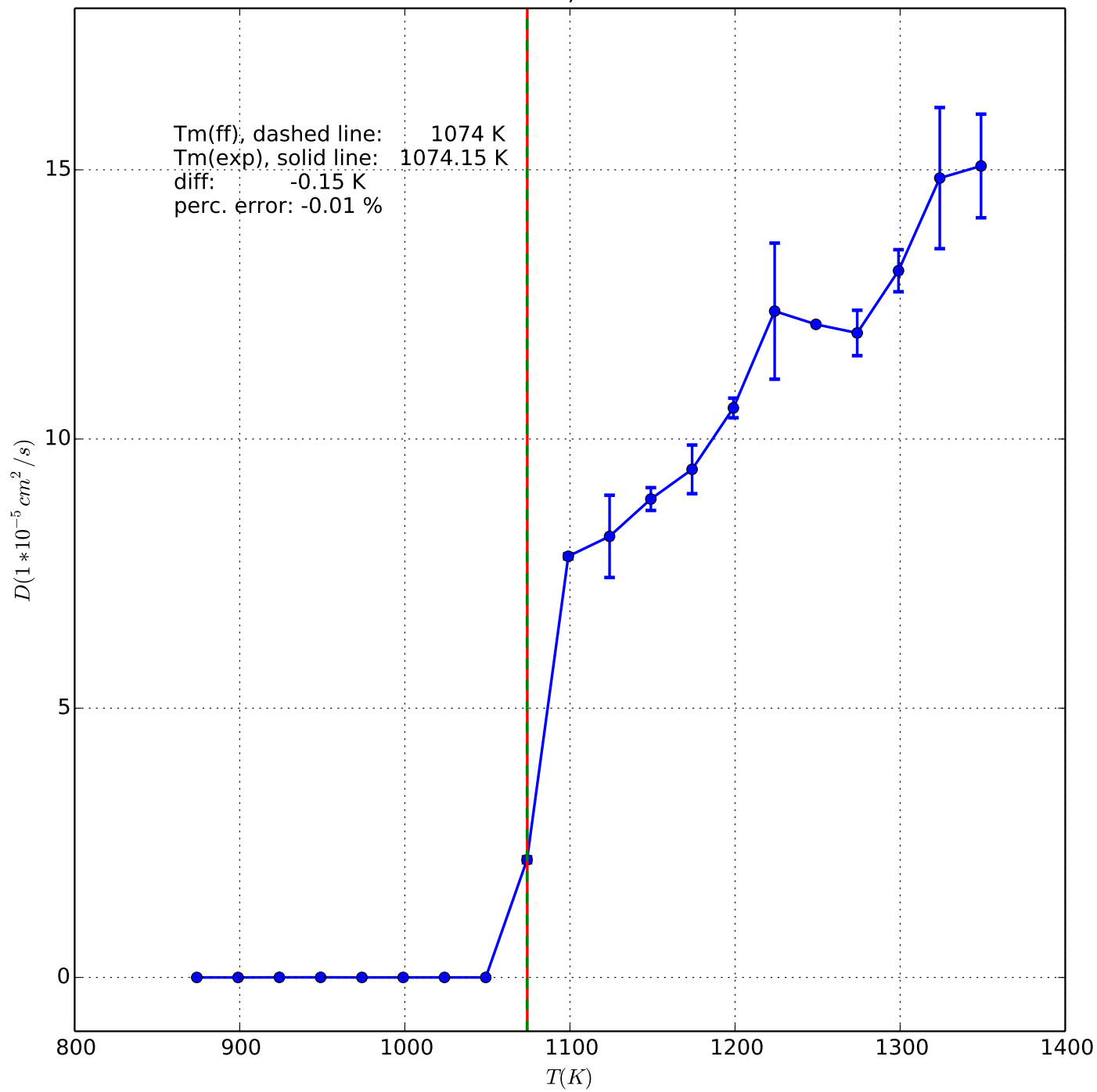
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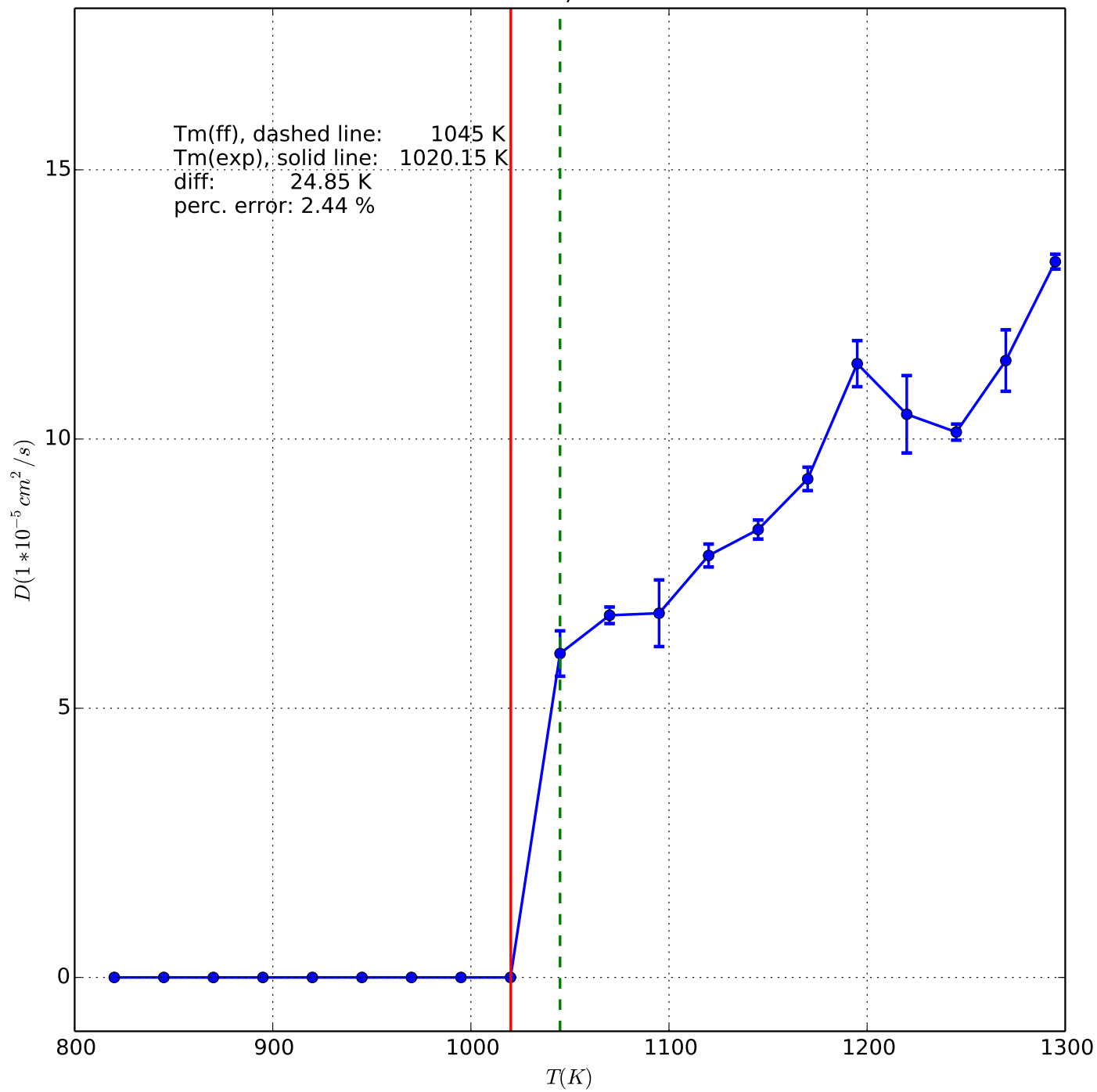
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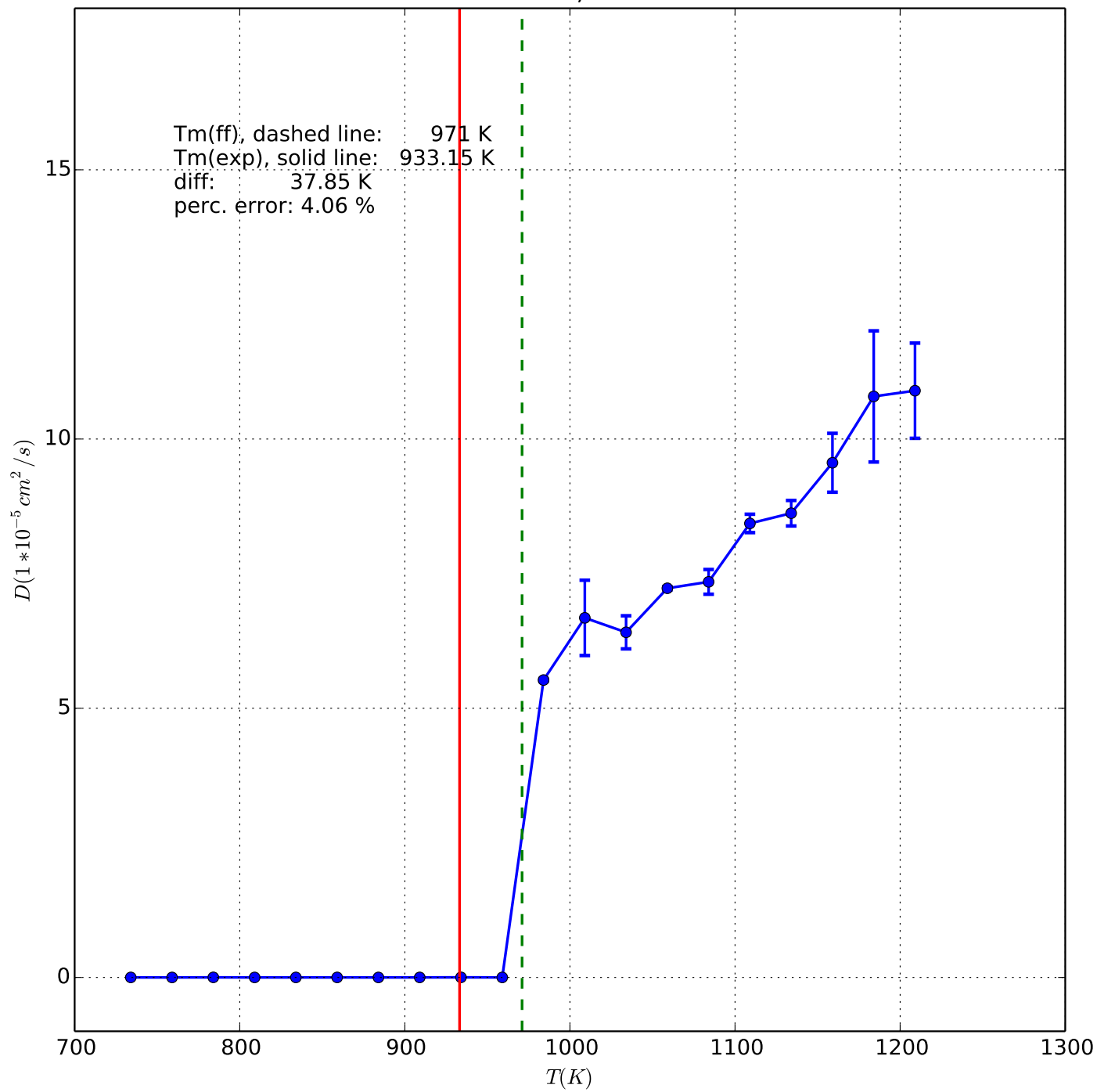
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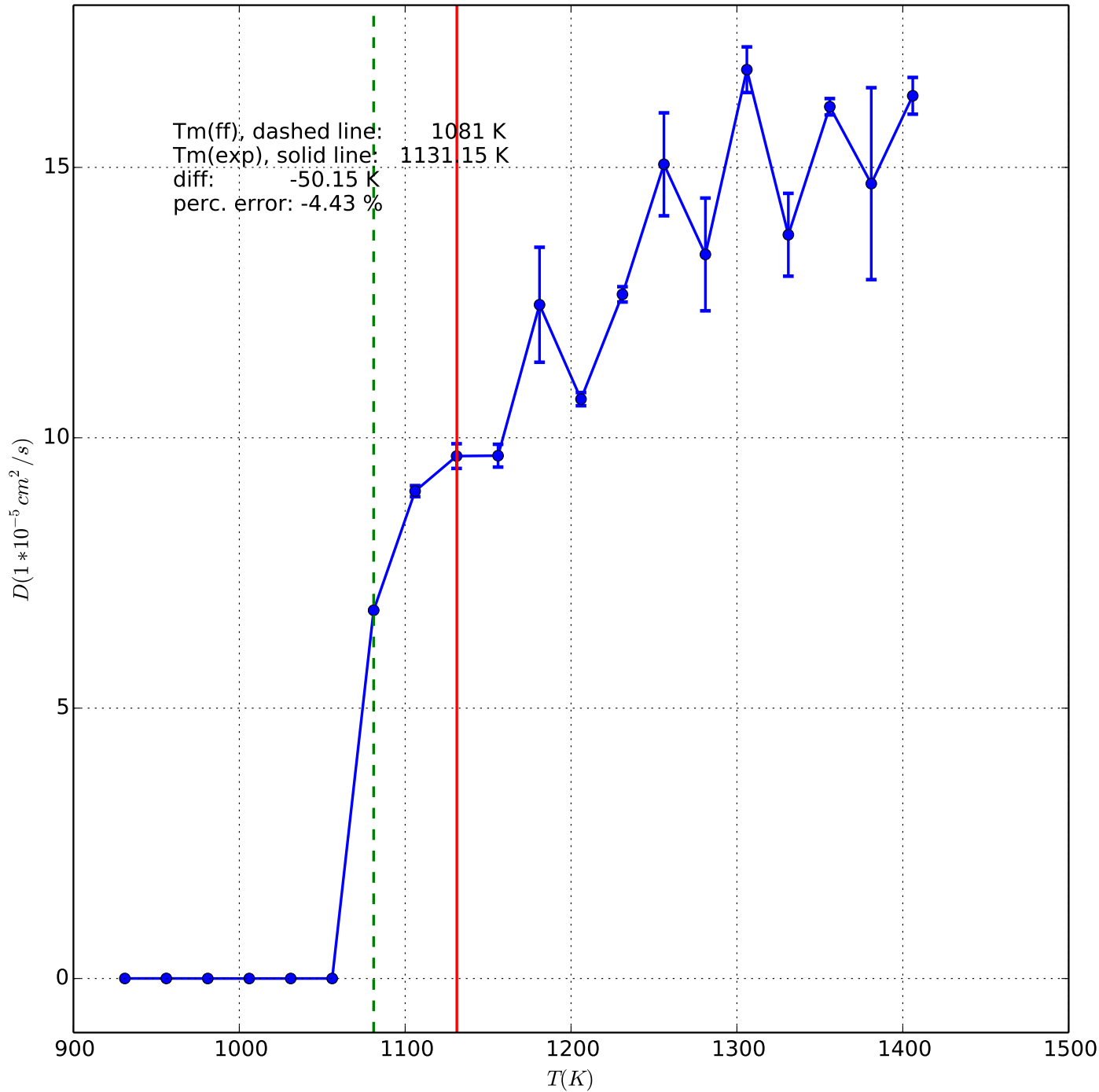
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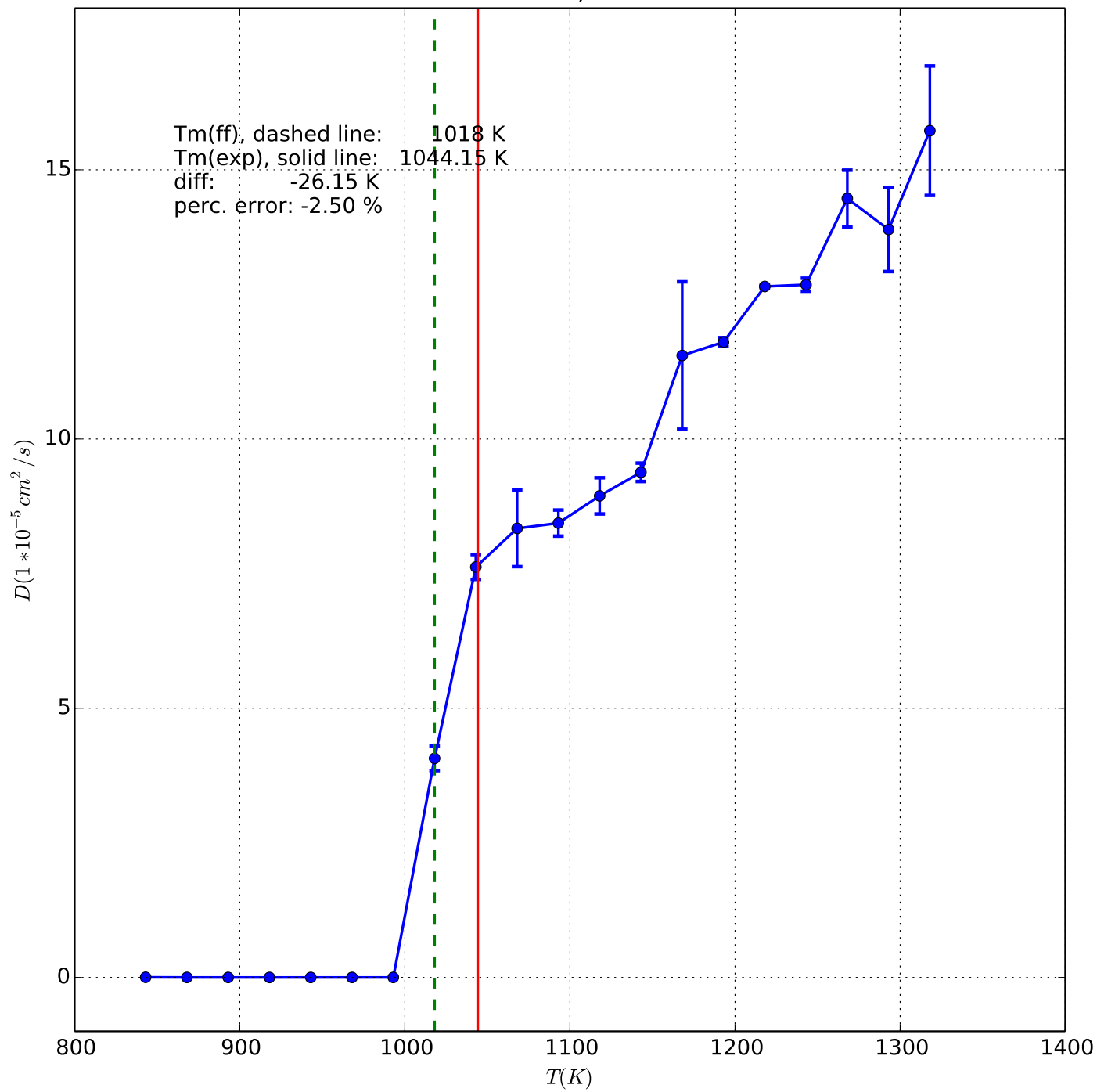
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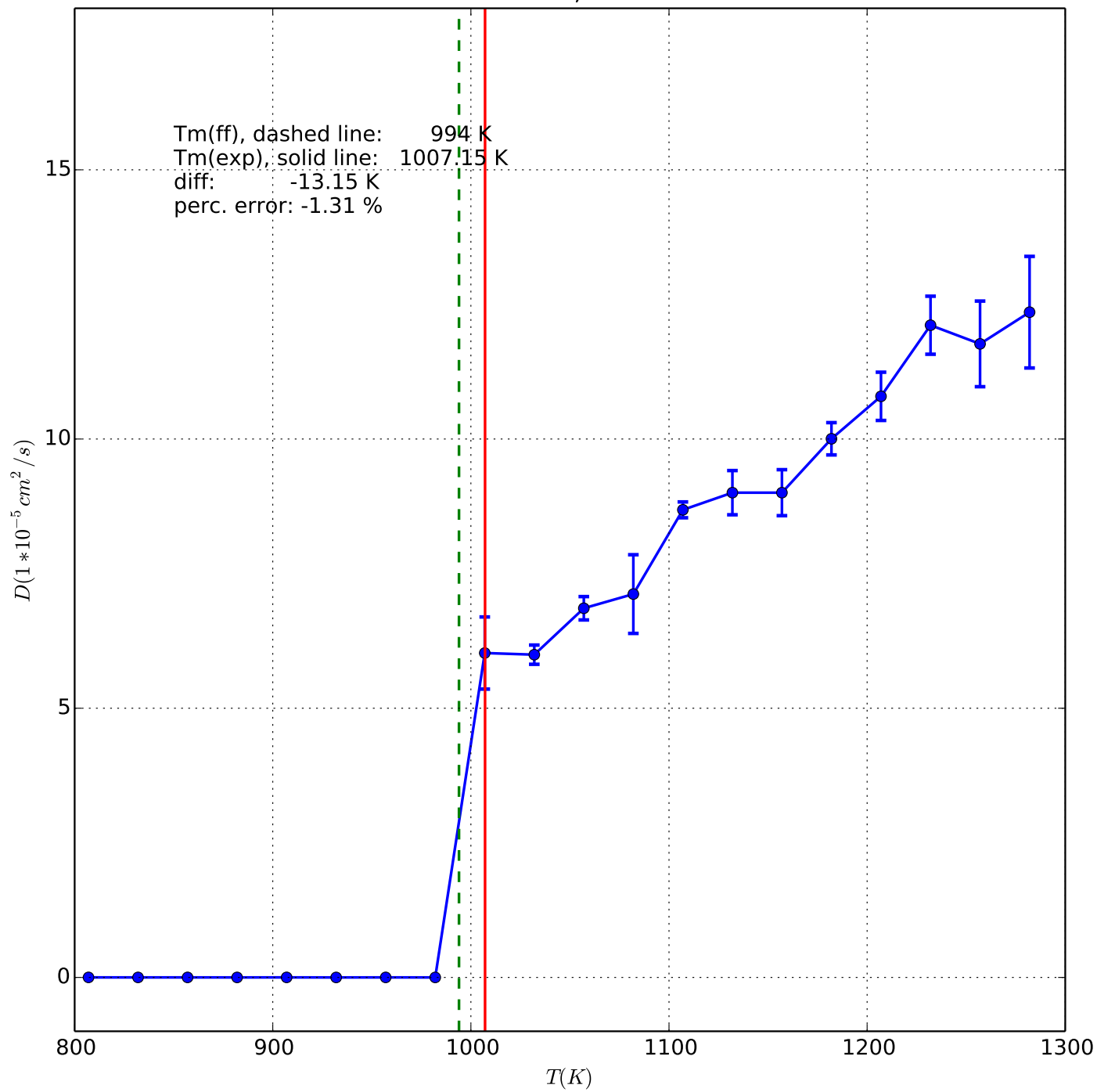
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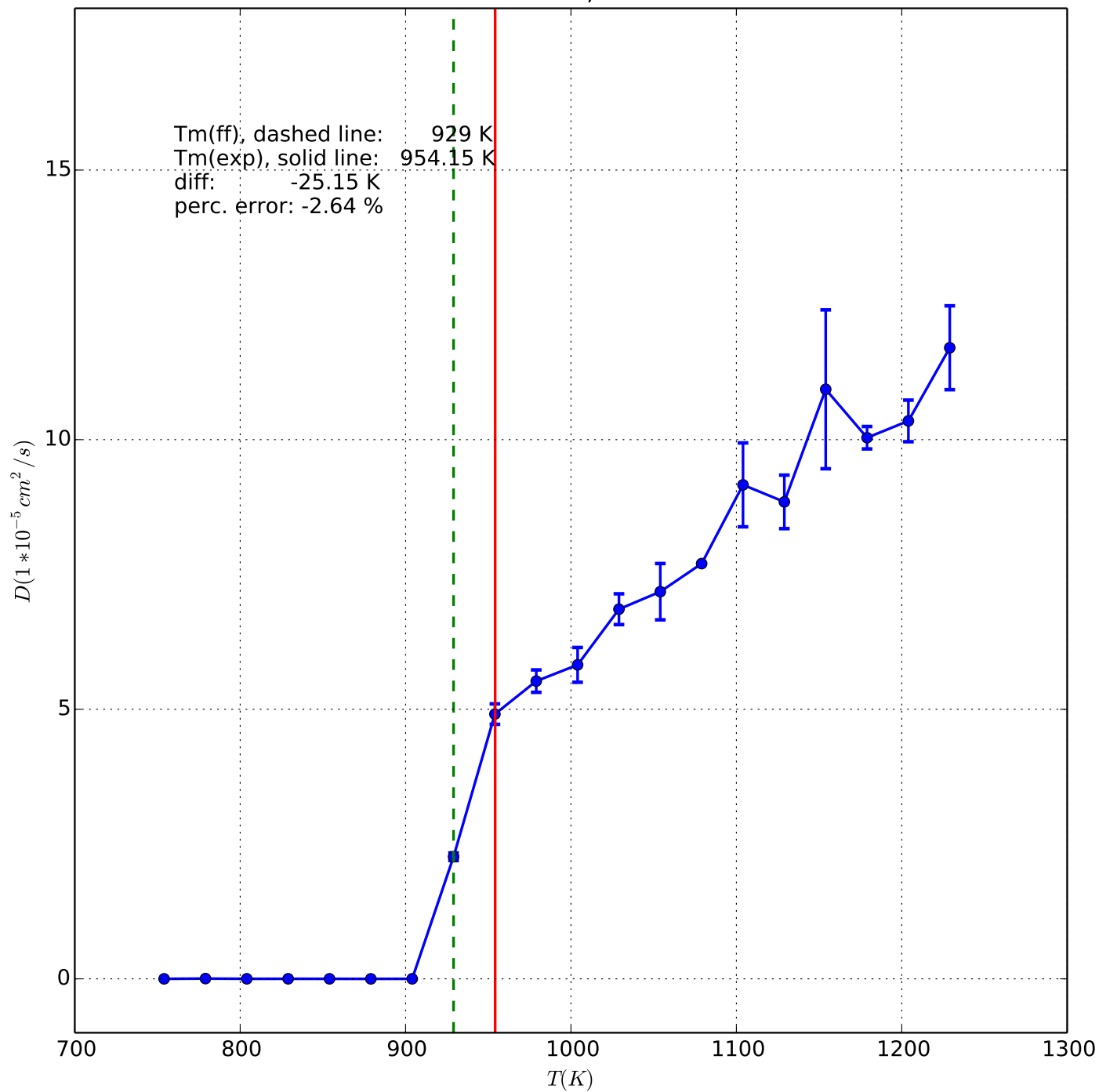
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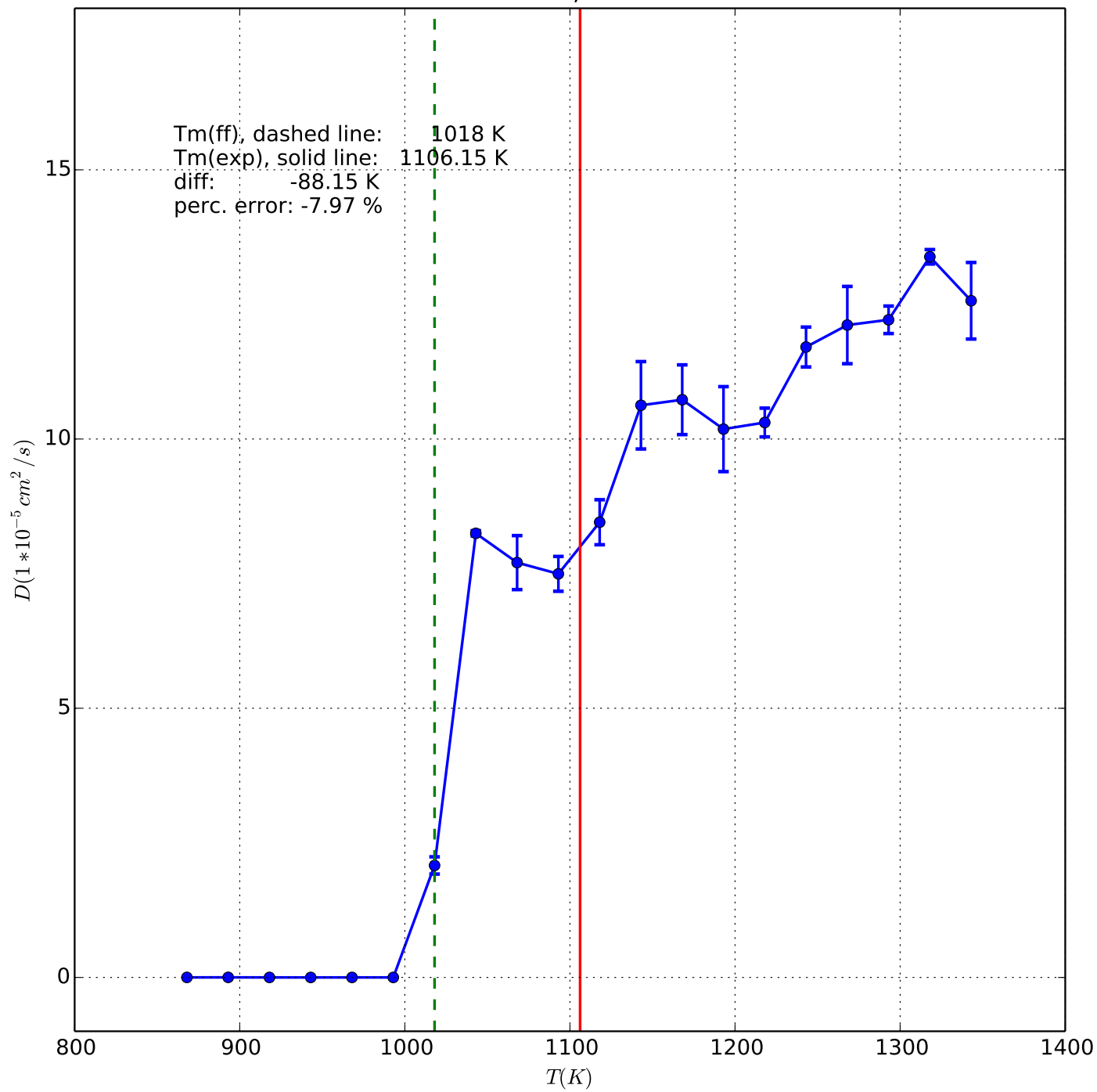
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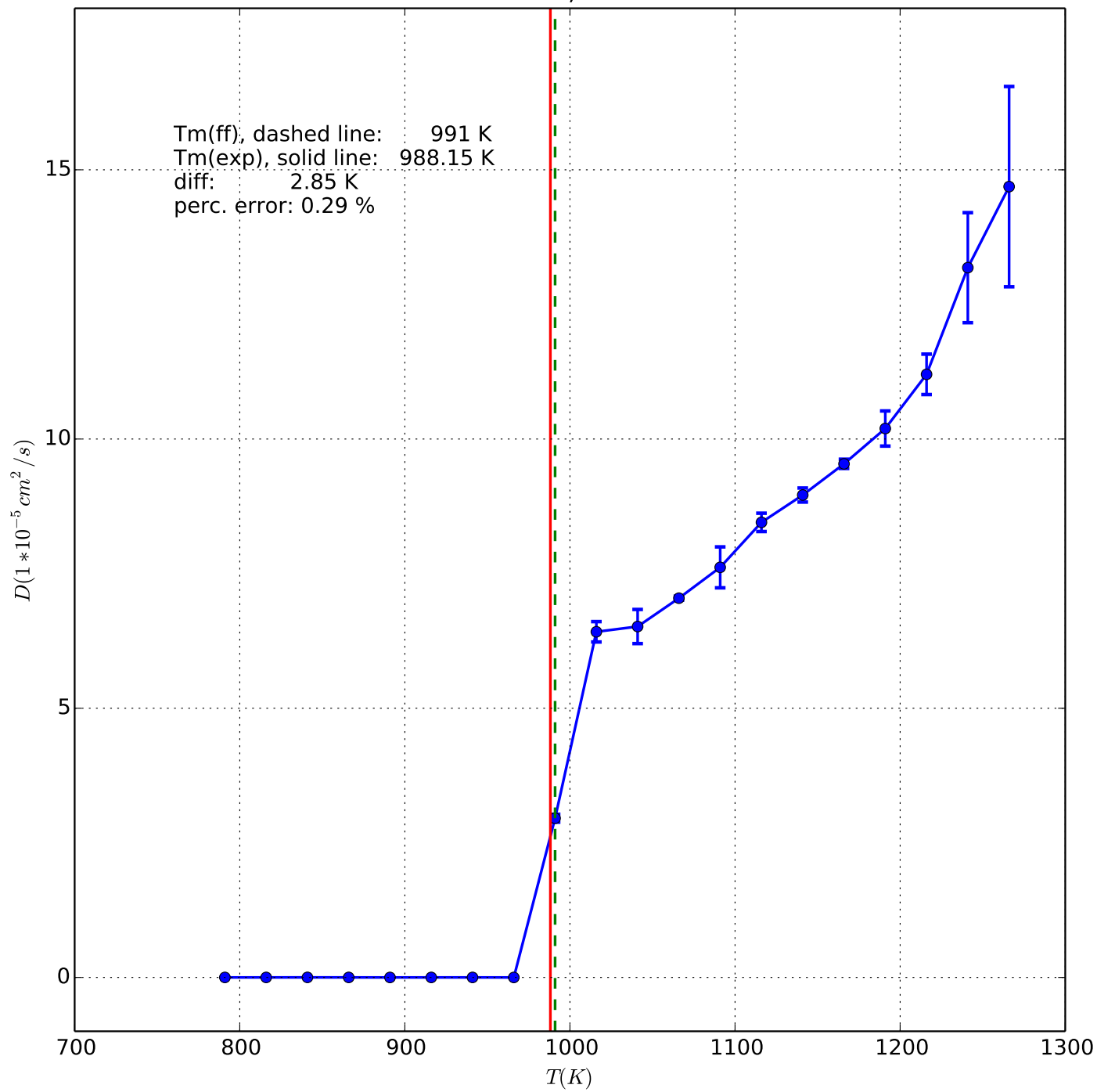
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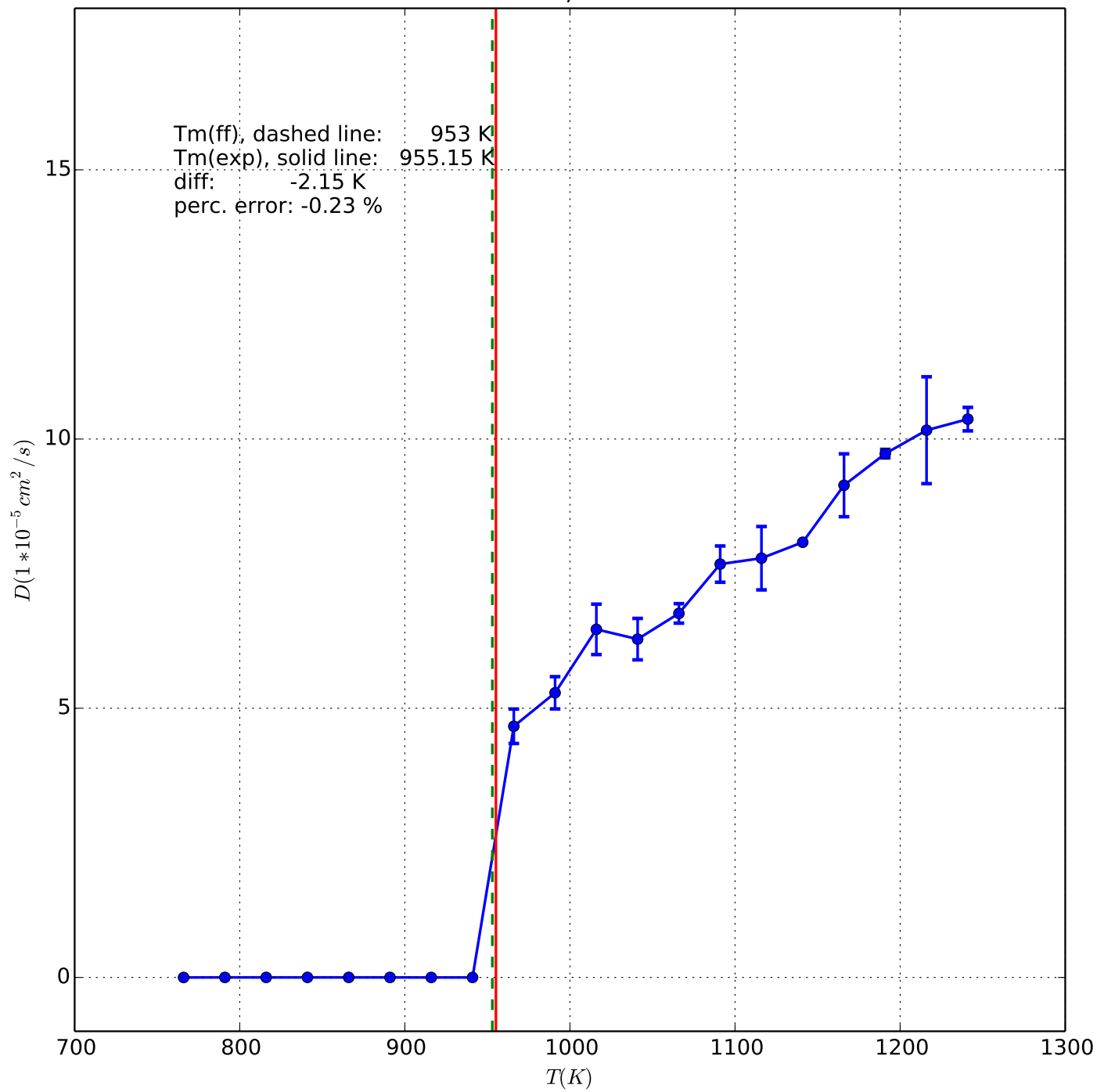
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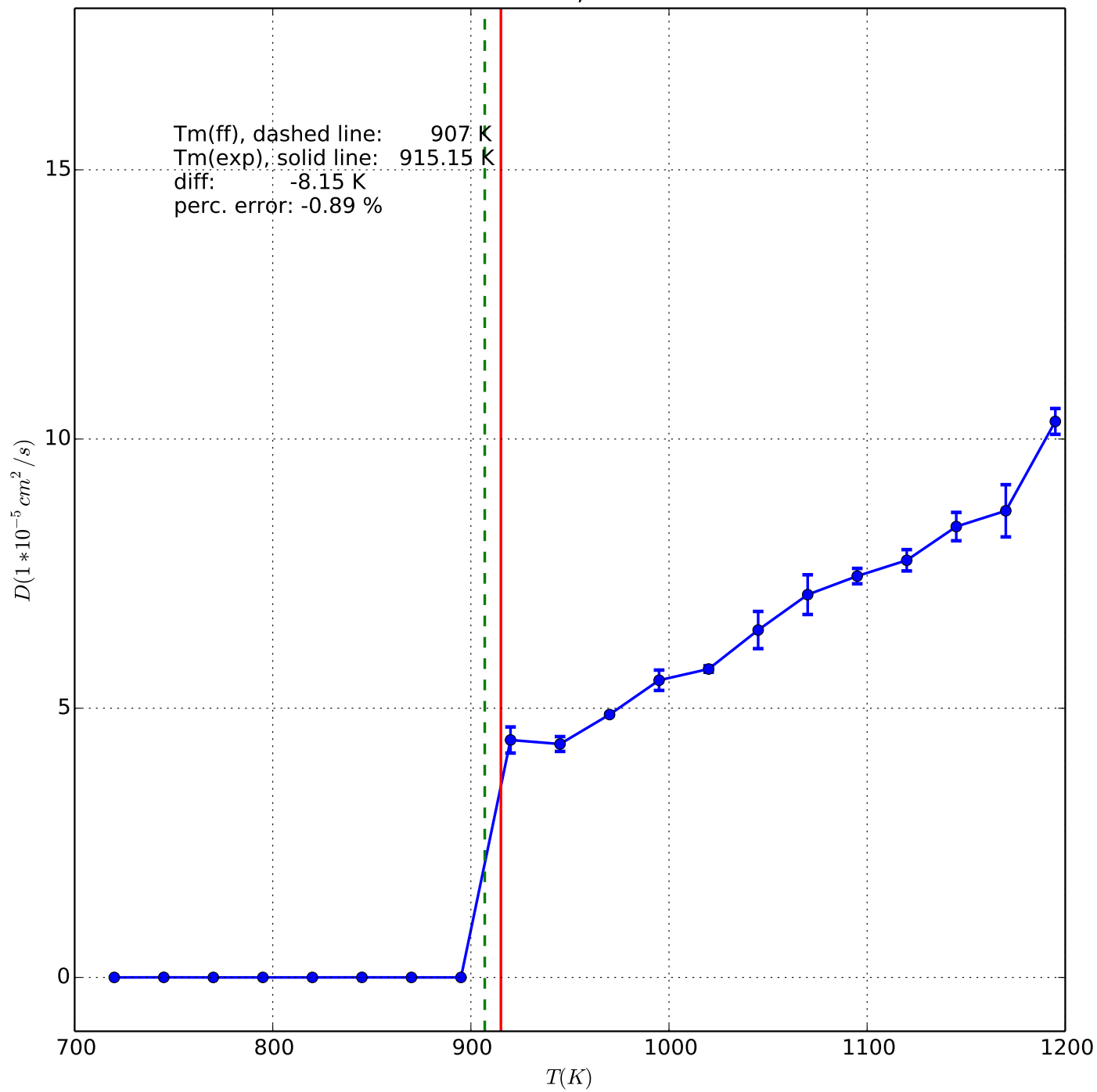
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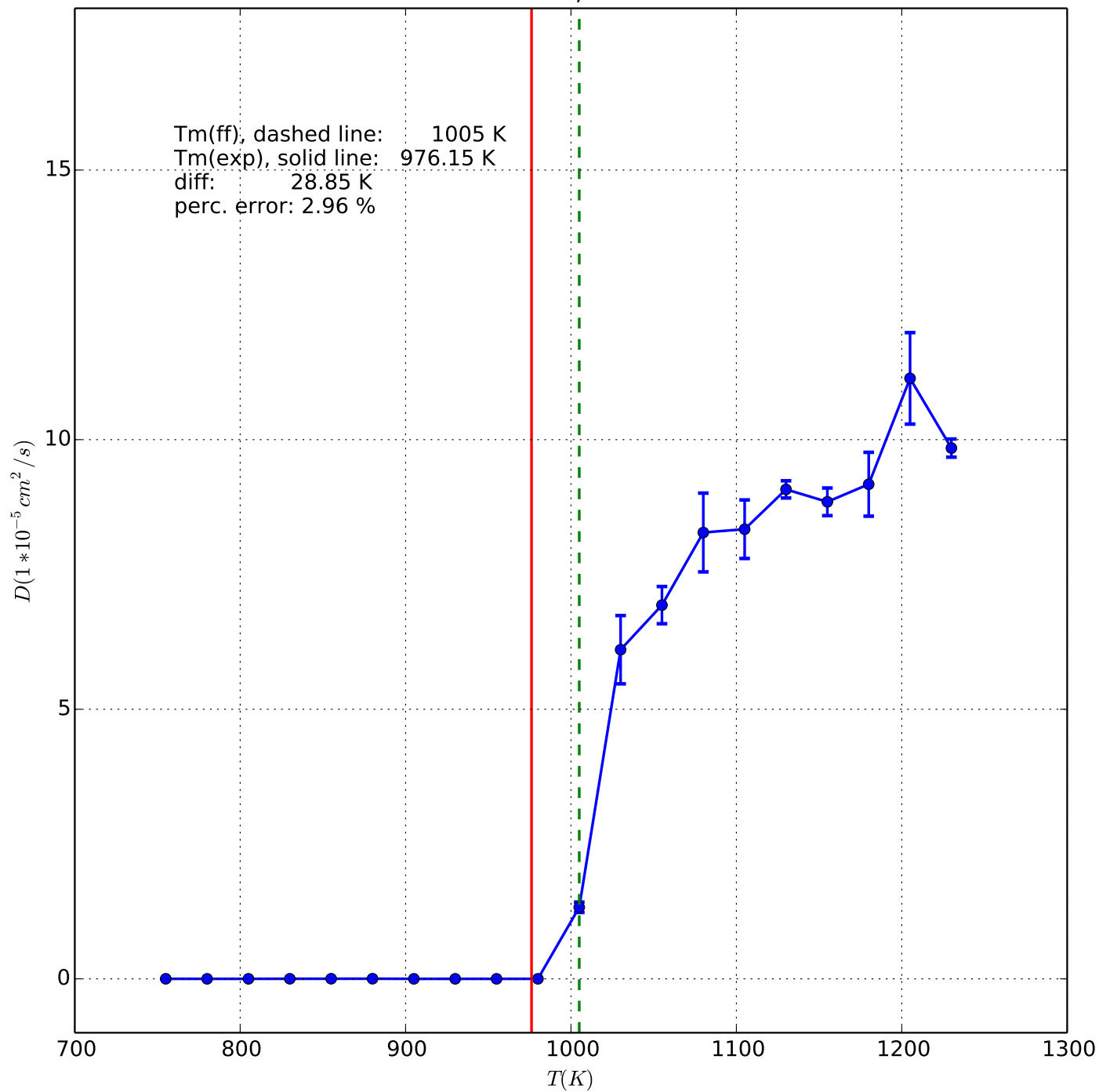
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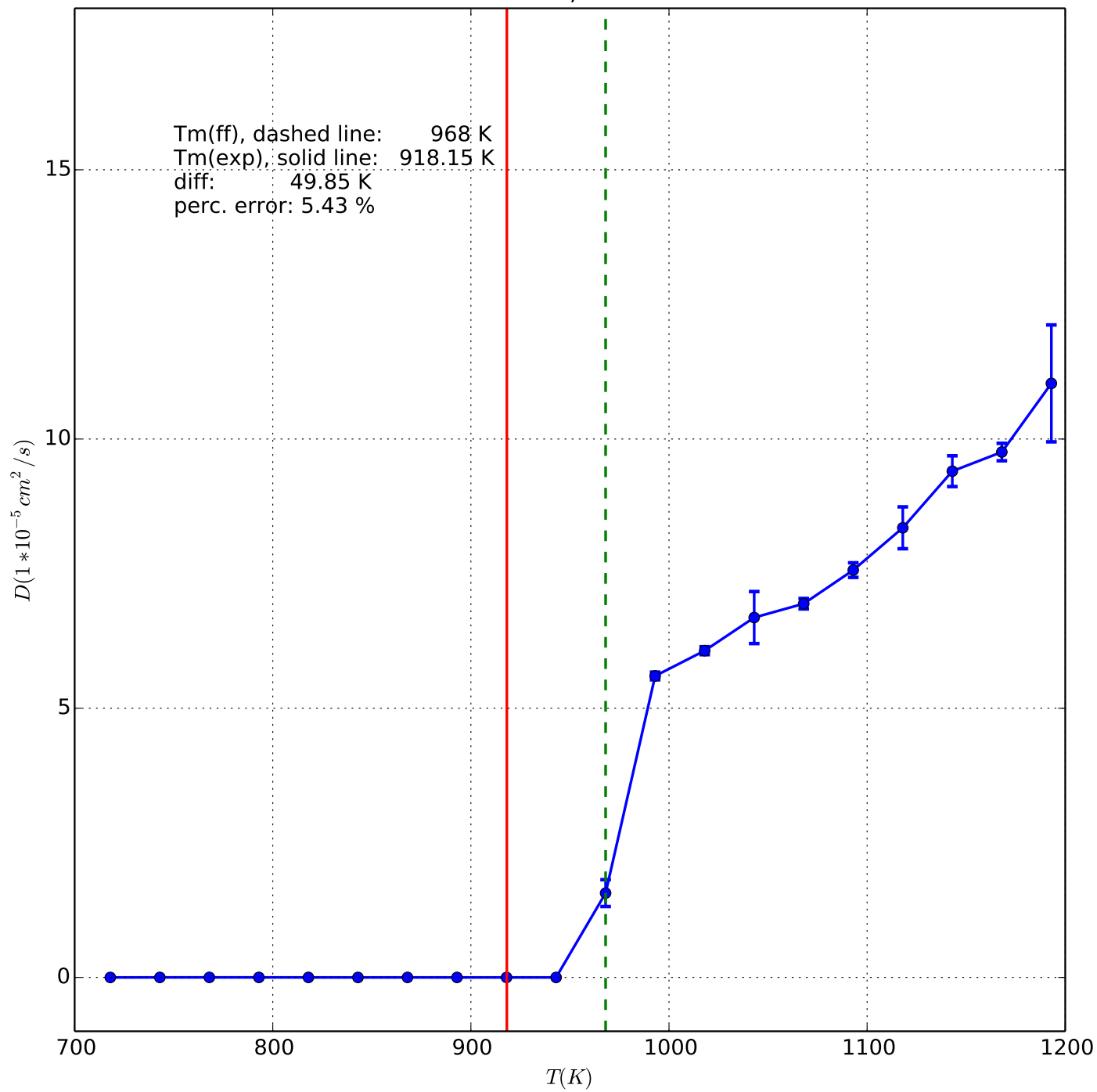
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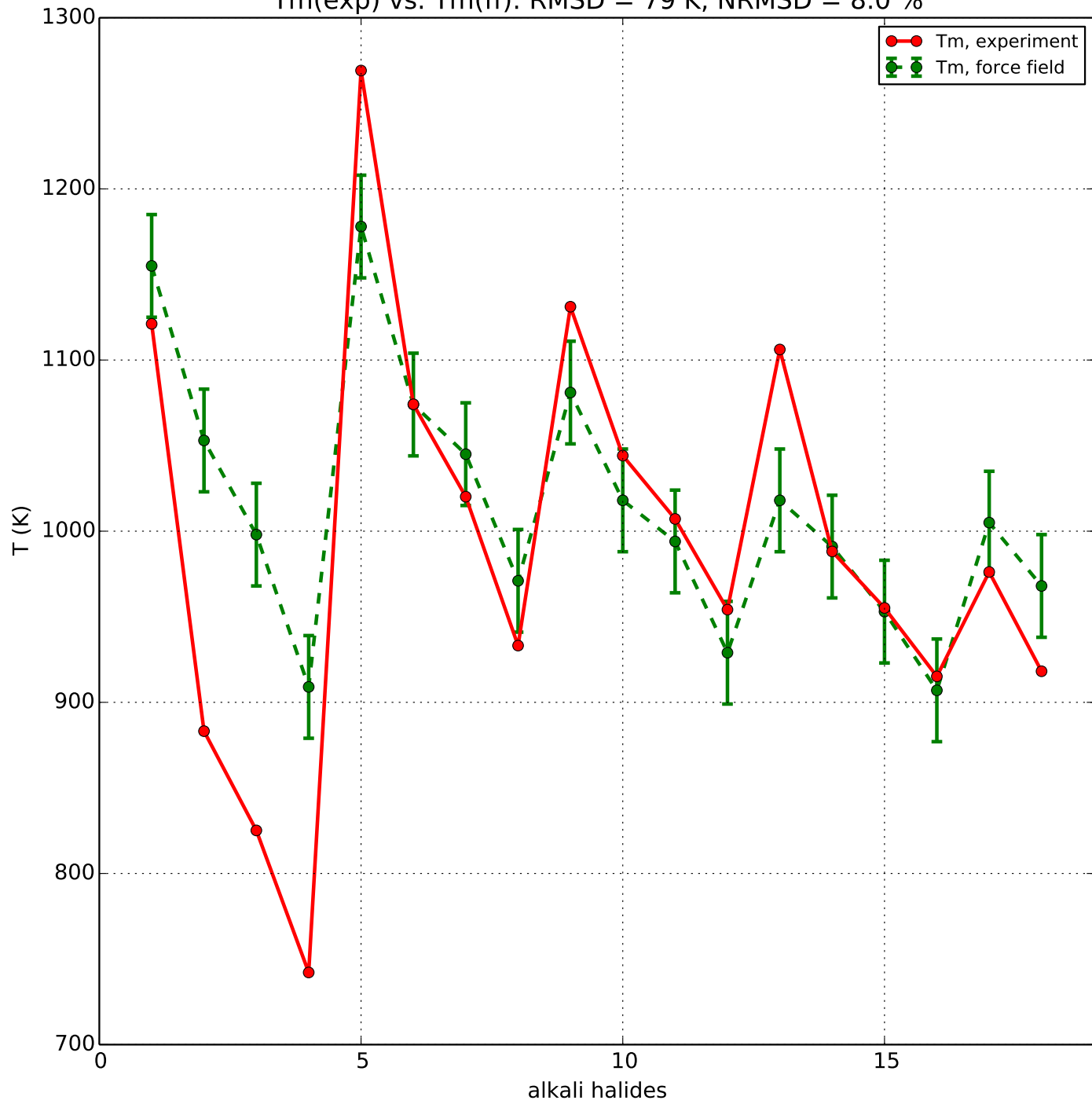
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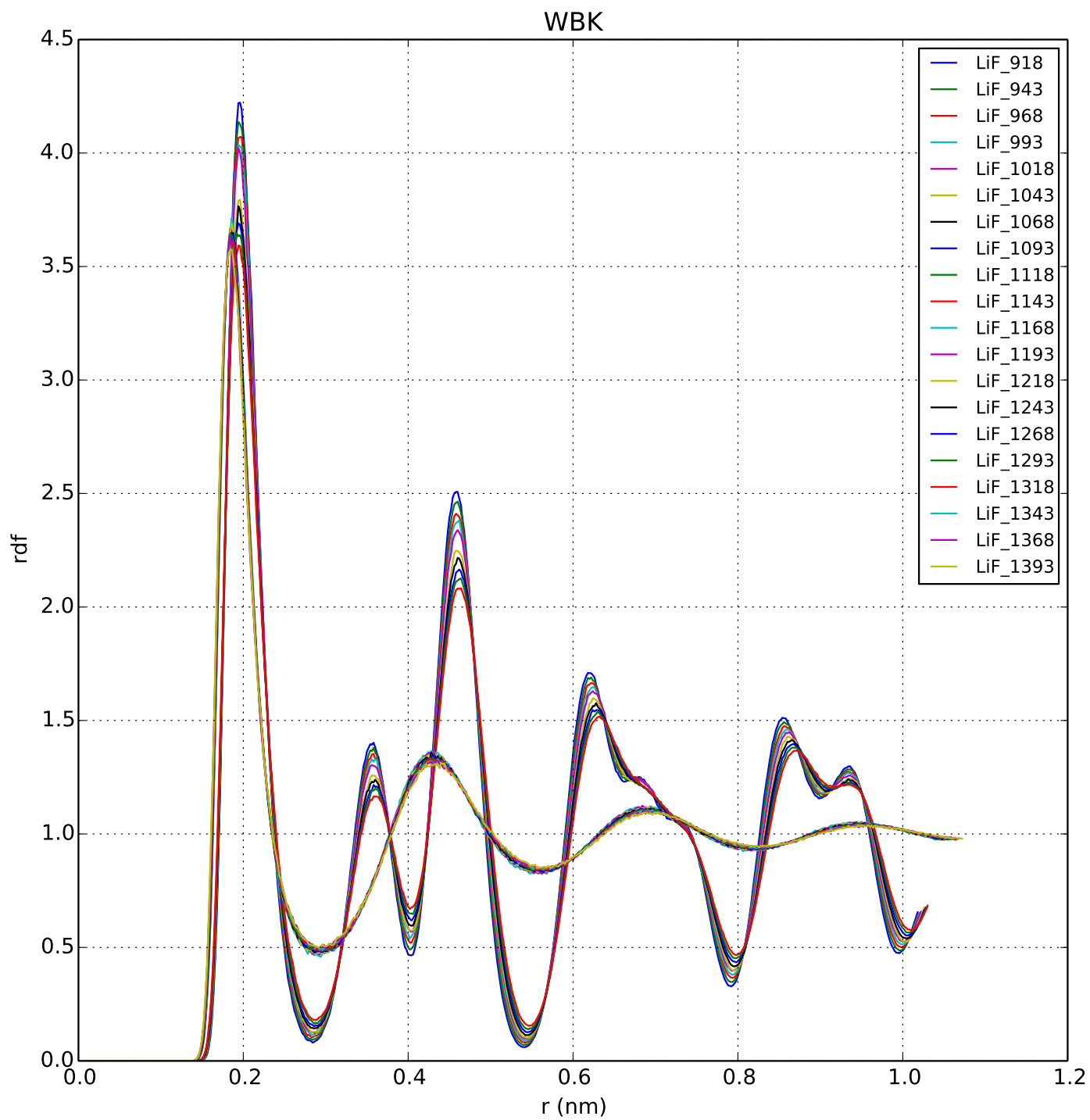


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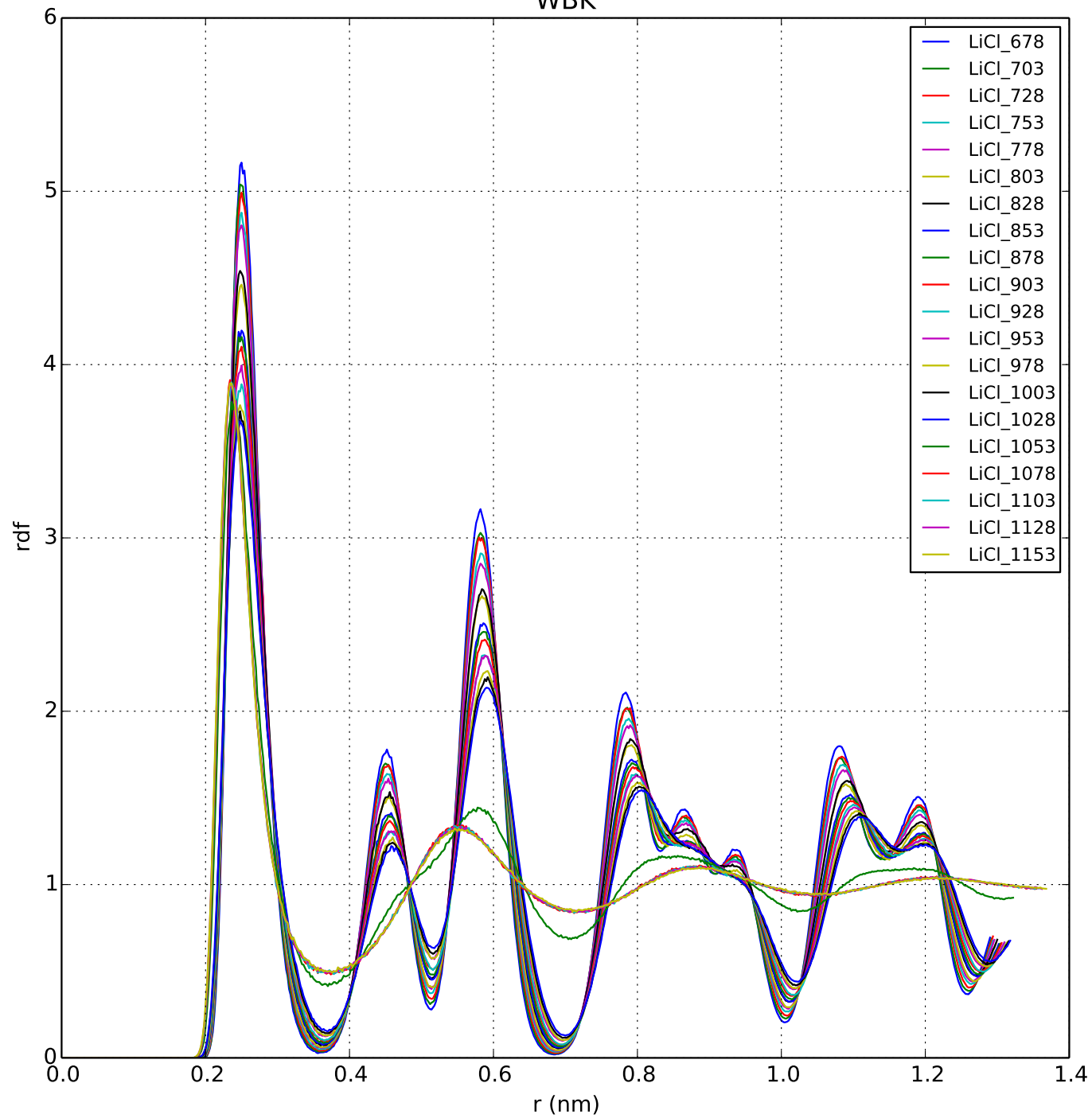


T_m(exp) vs. T_m(ff): RMSD = 79 K, NRMSD = 8.0 %

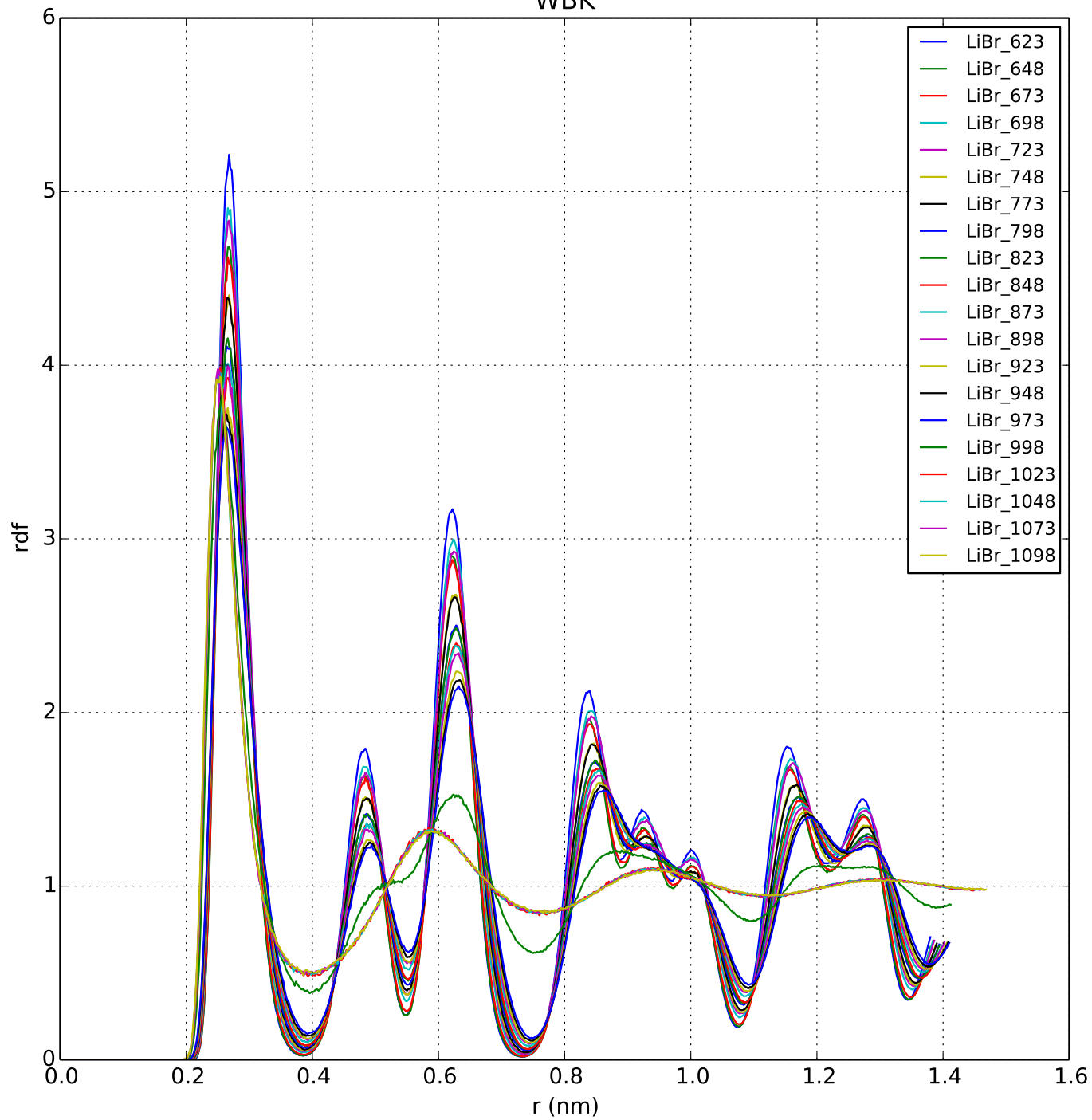




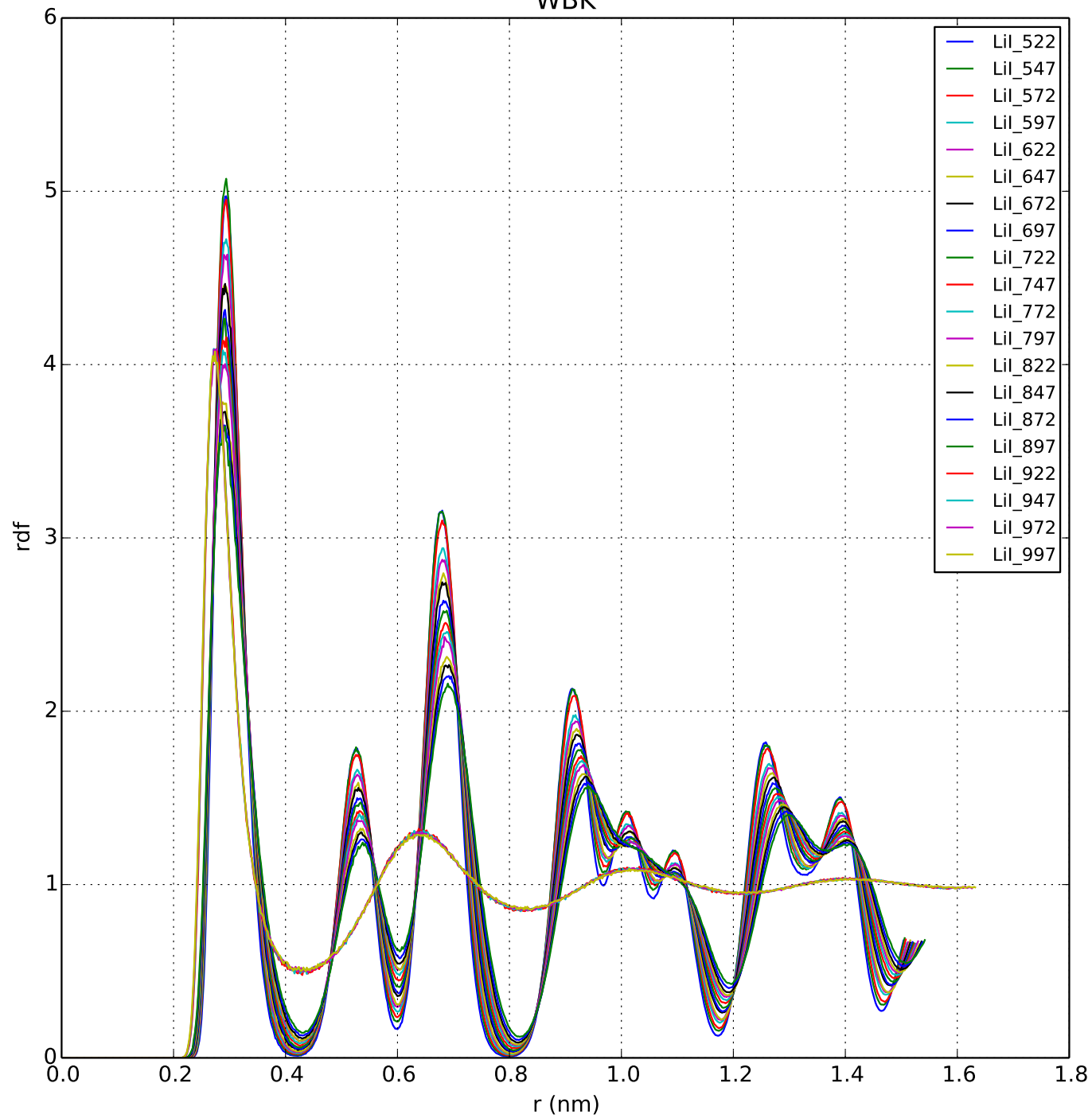
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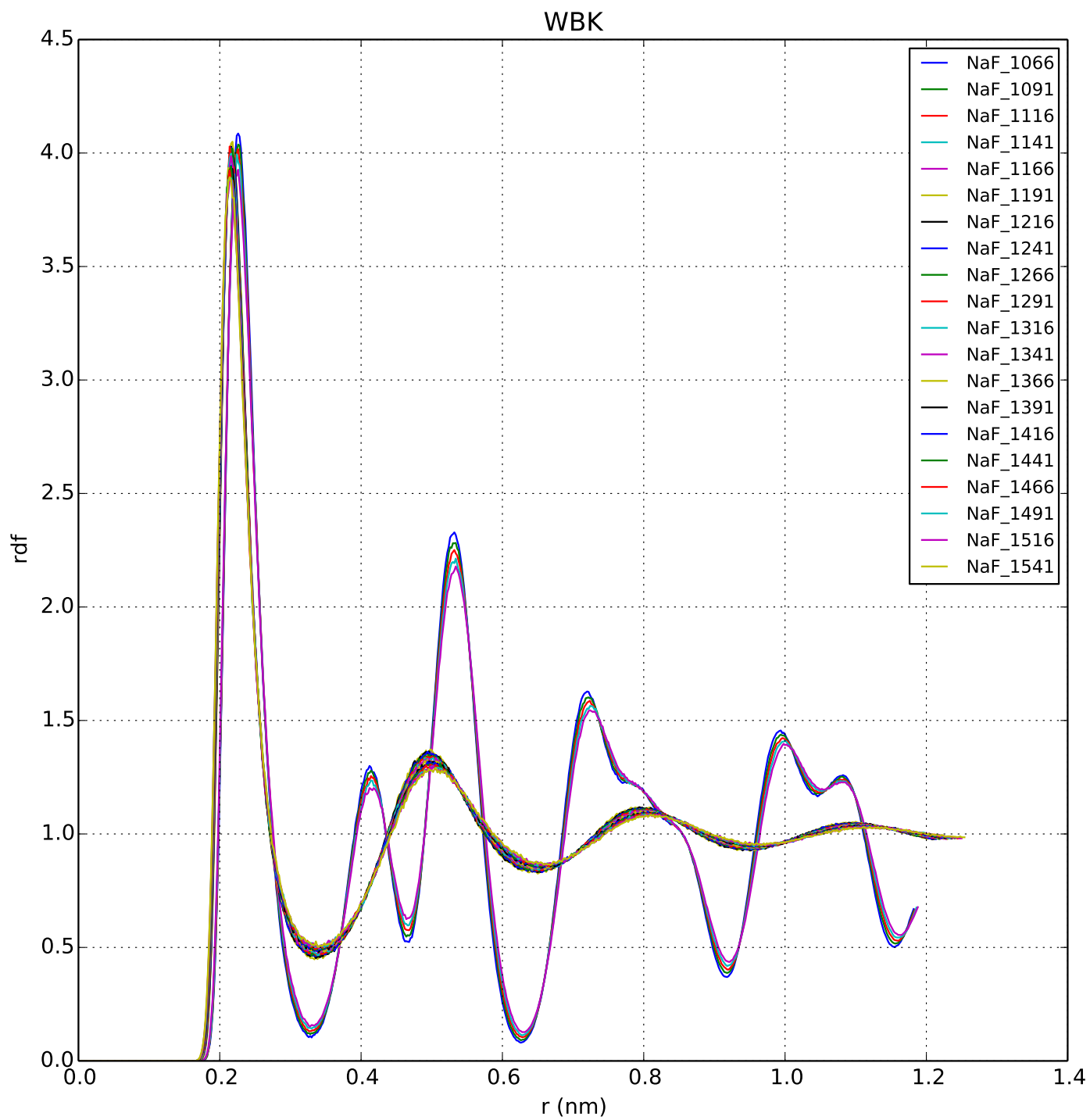


WBK

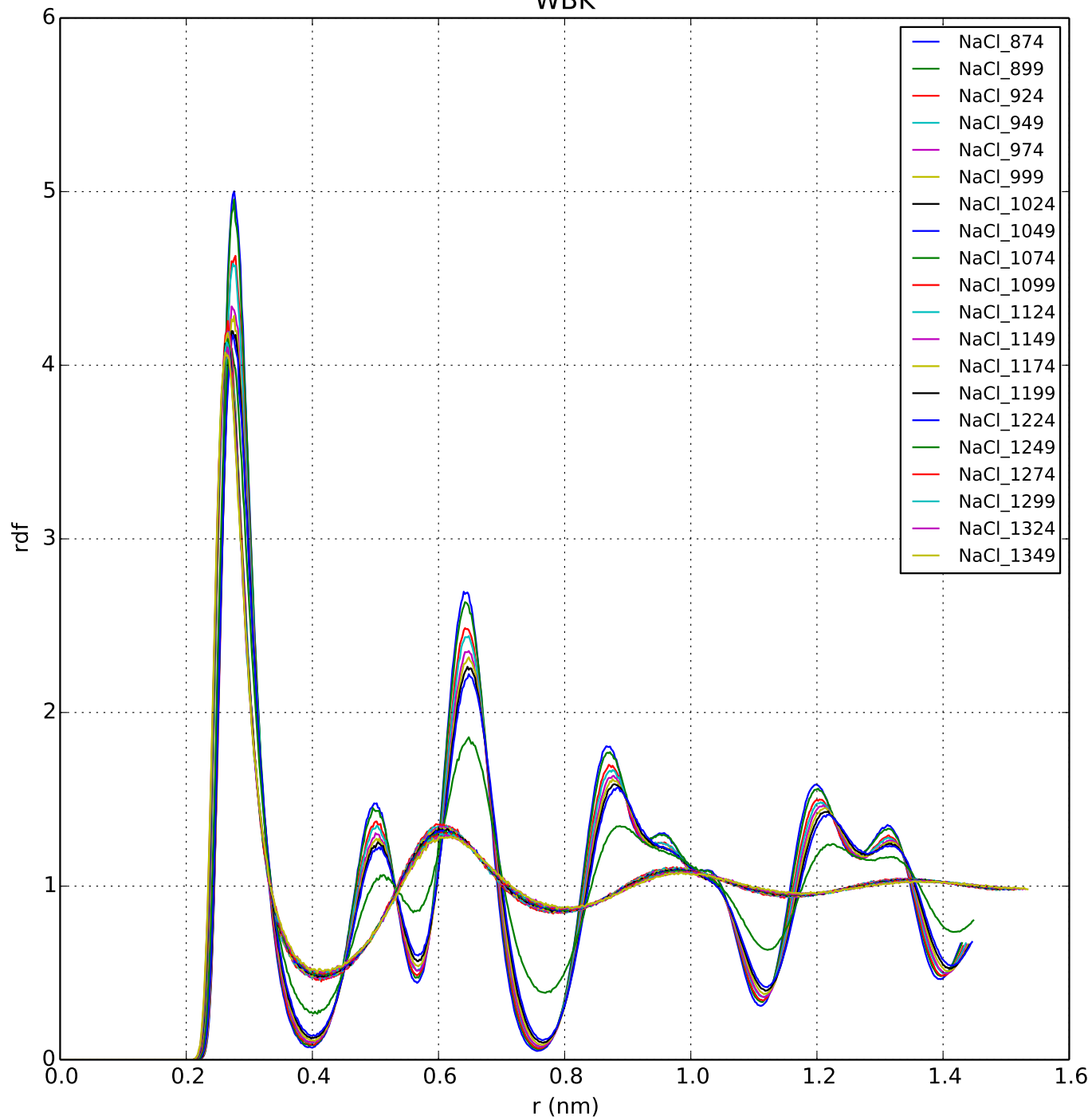


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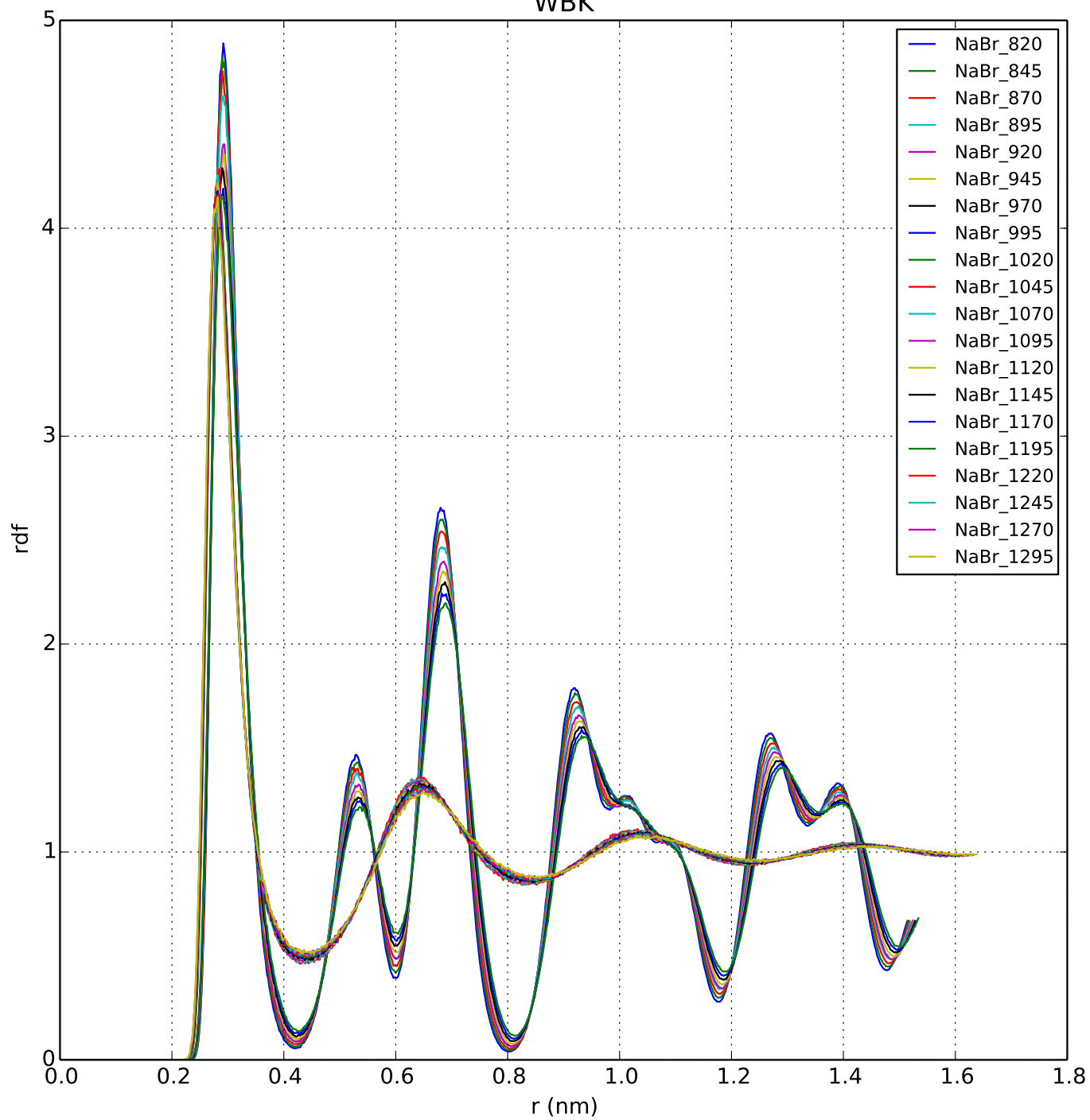


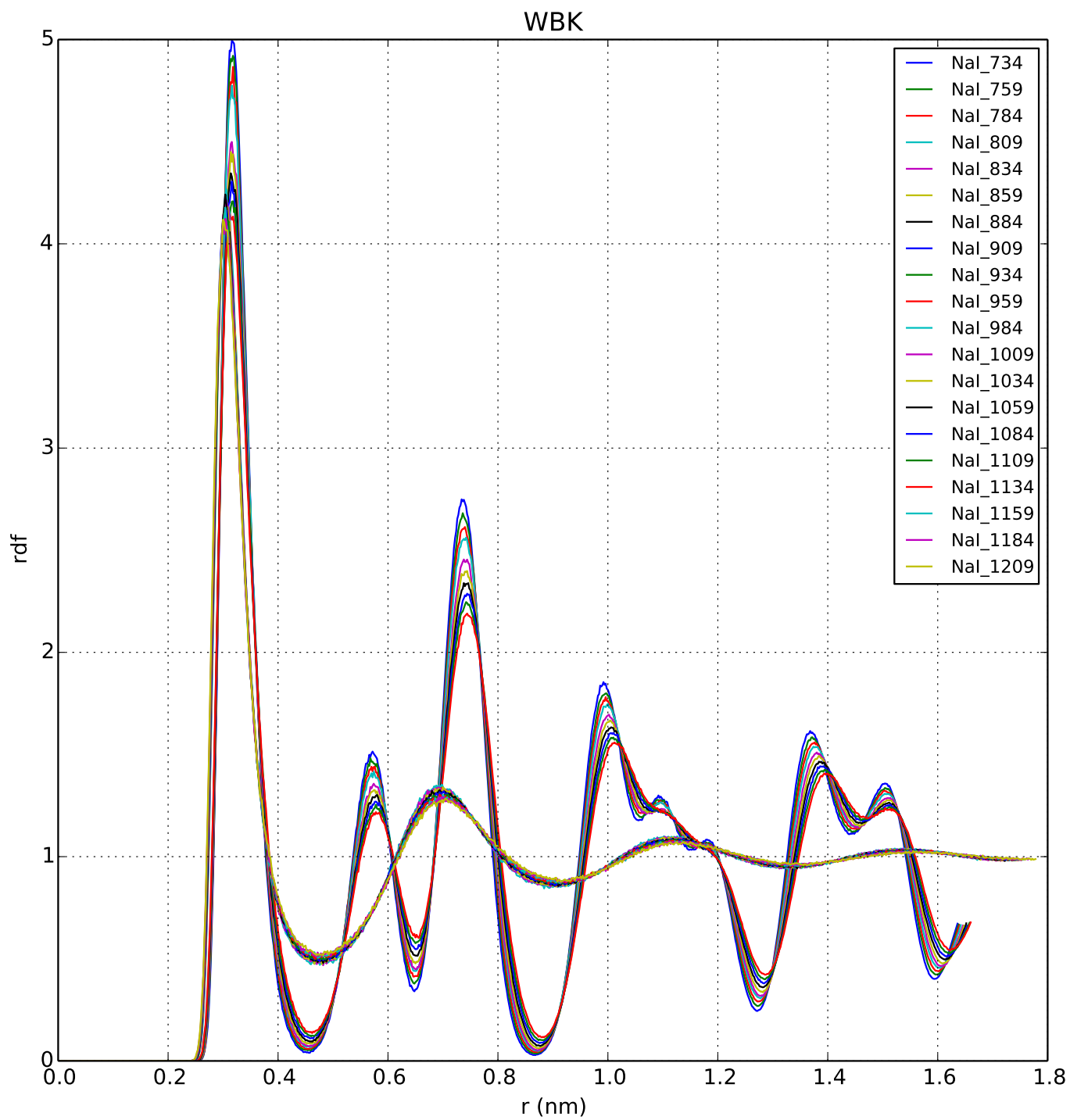


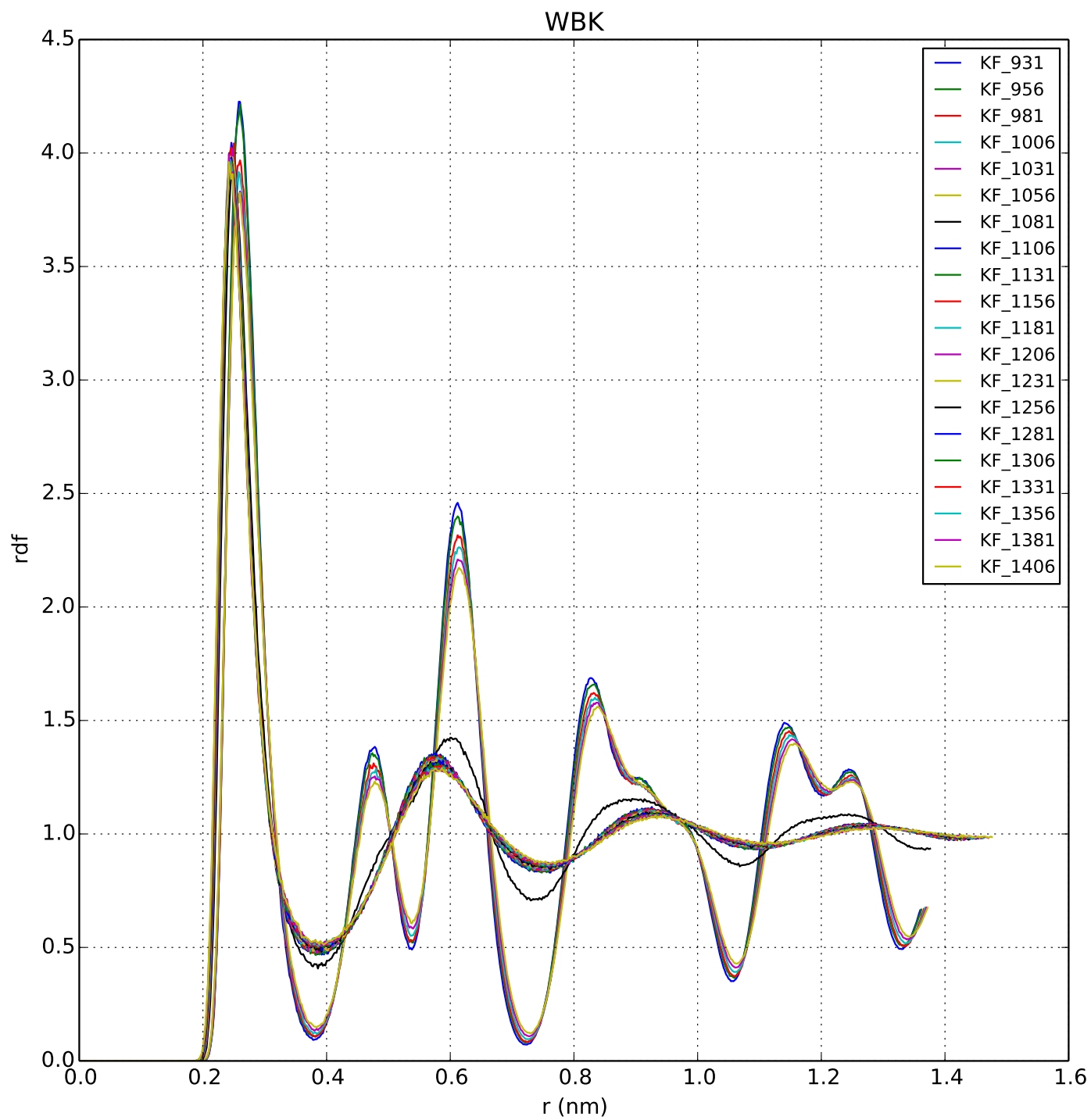
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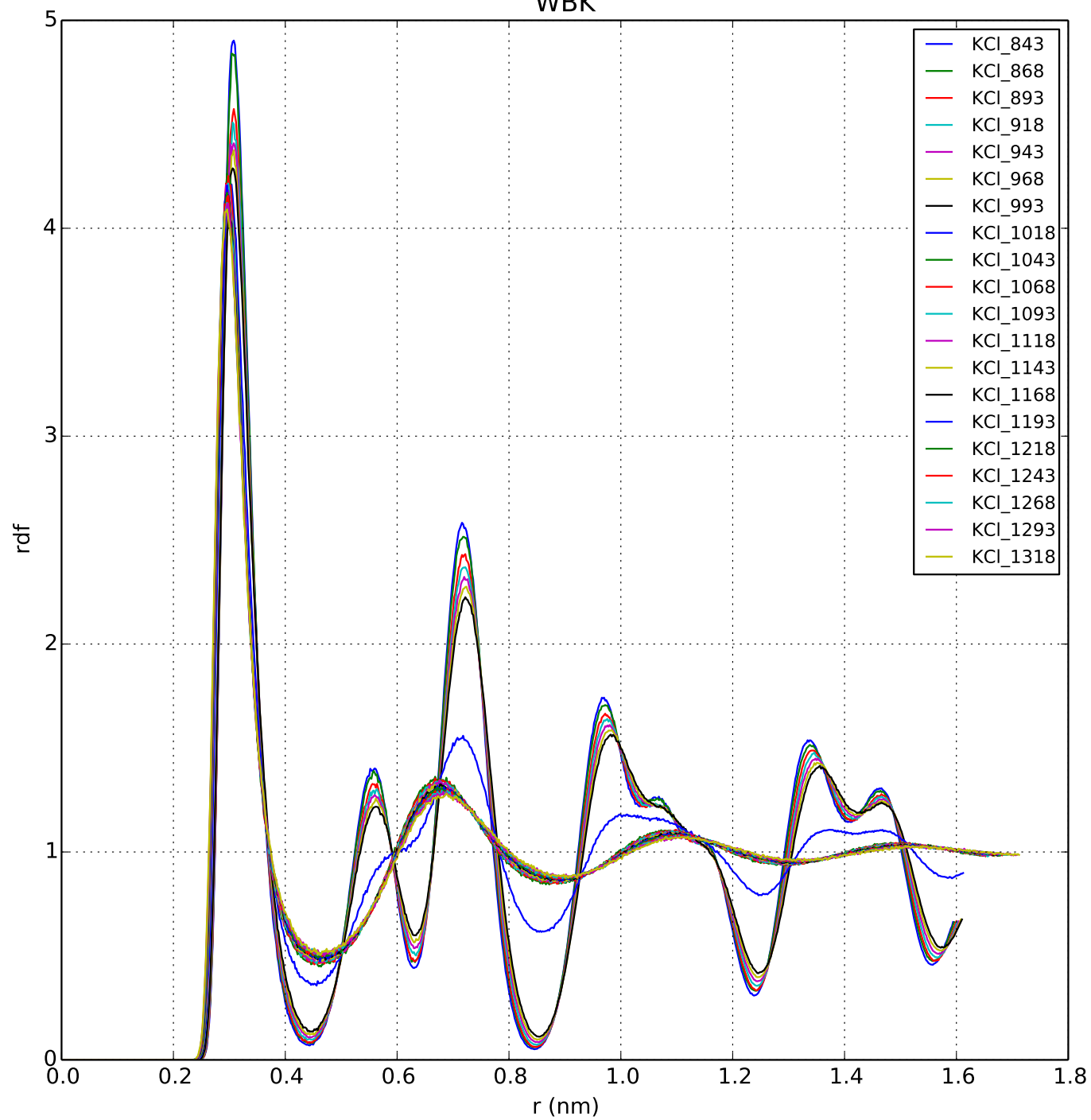
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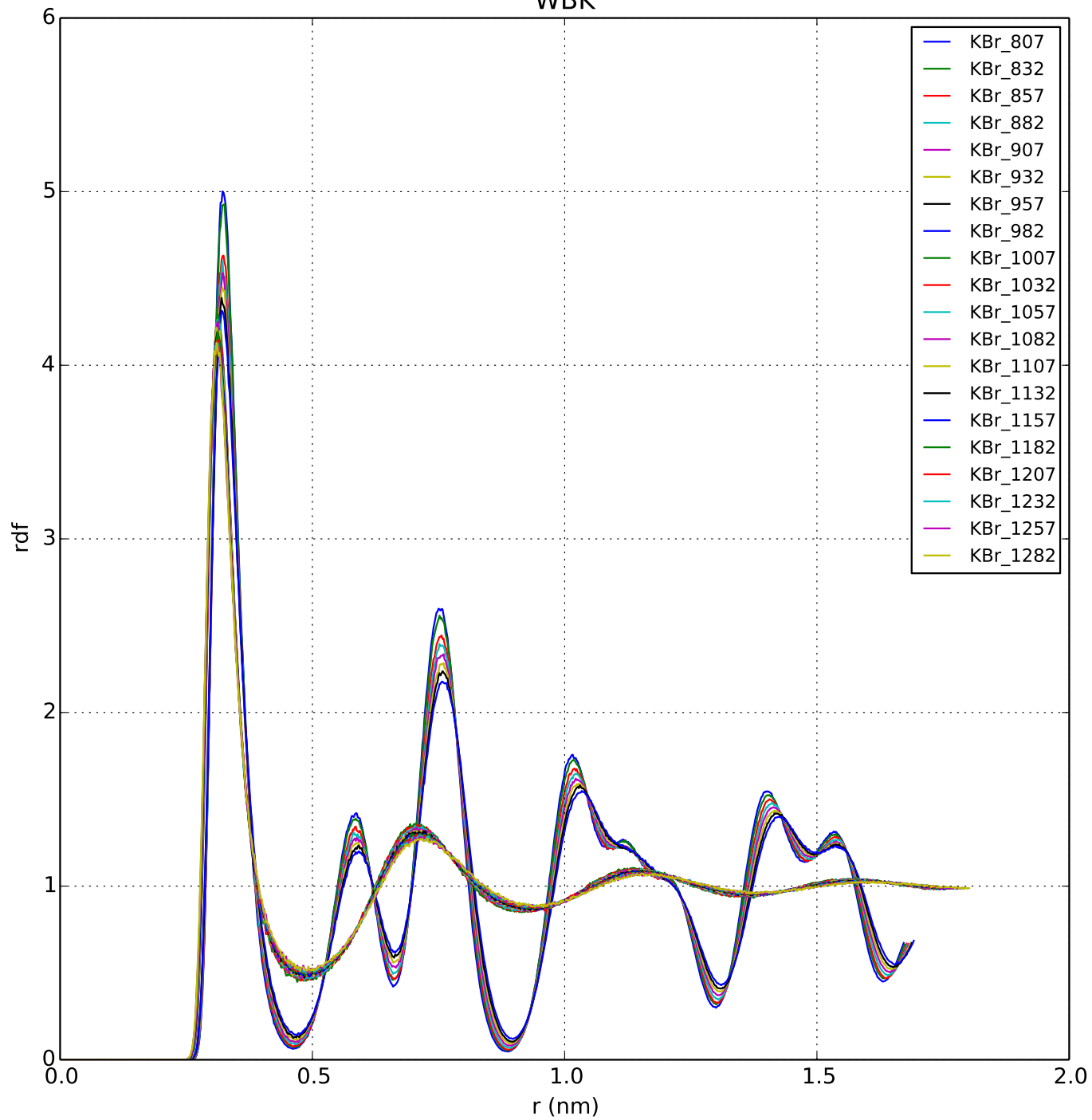




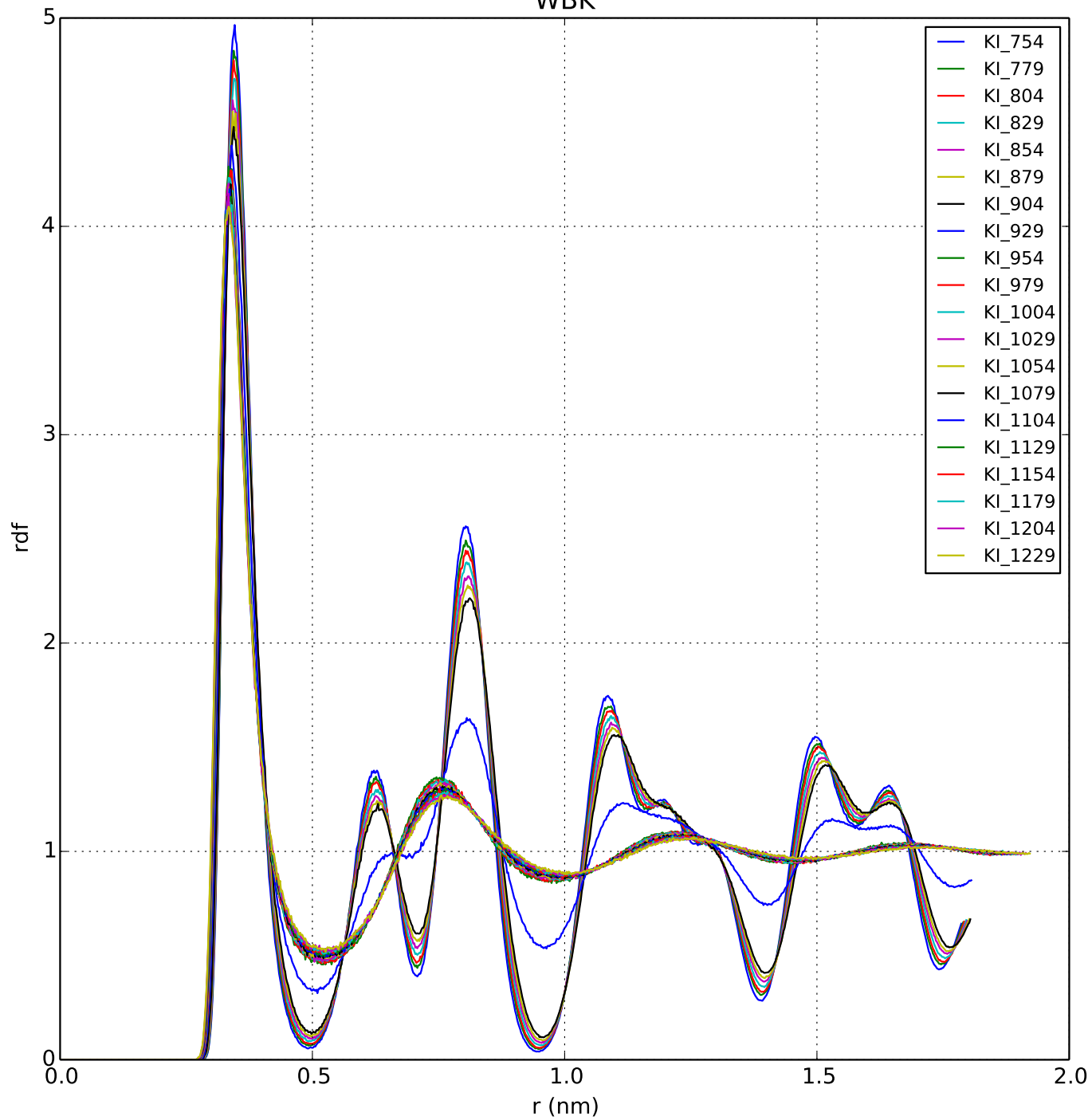
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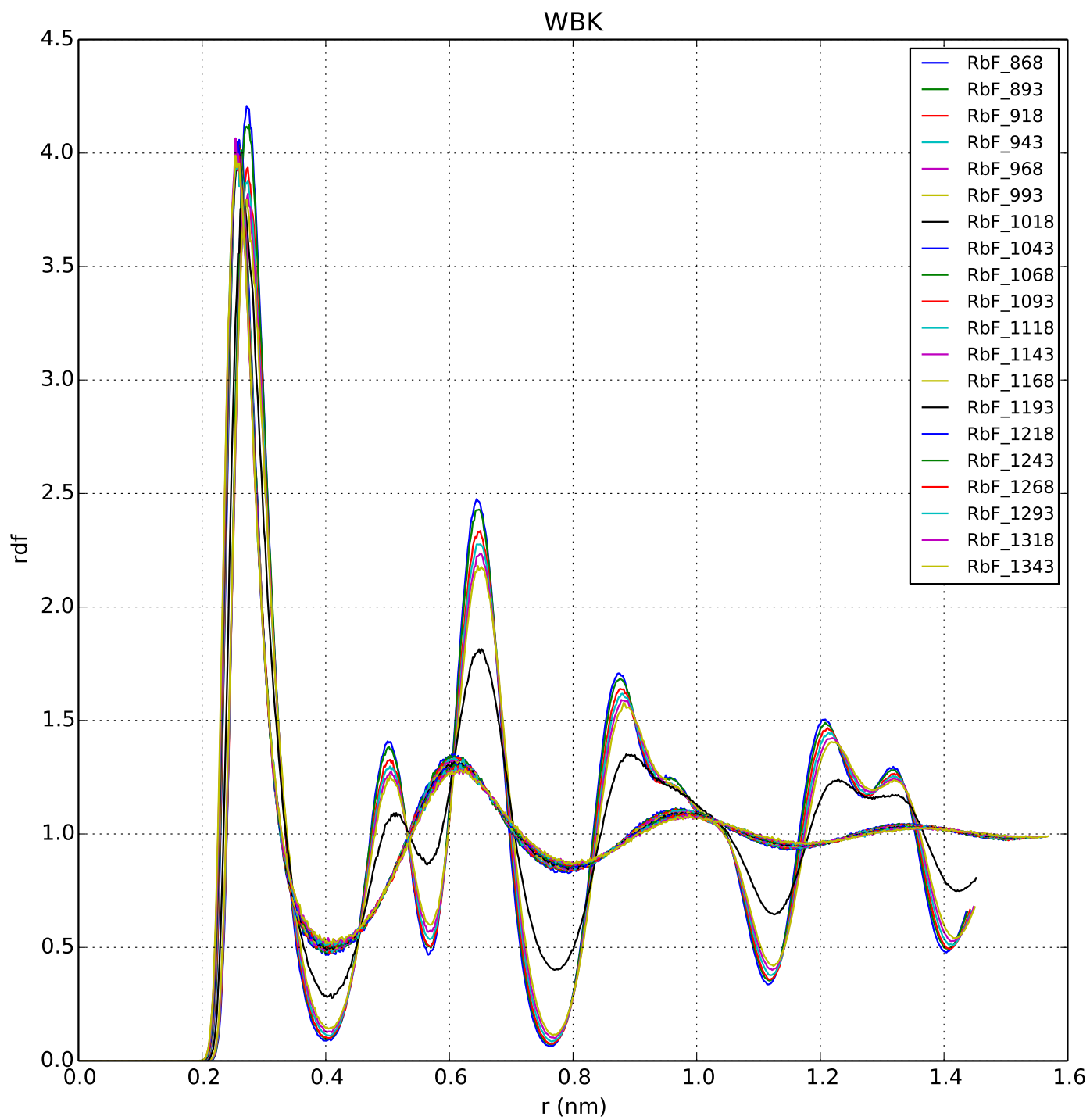


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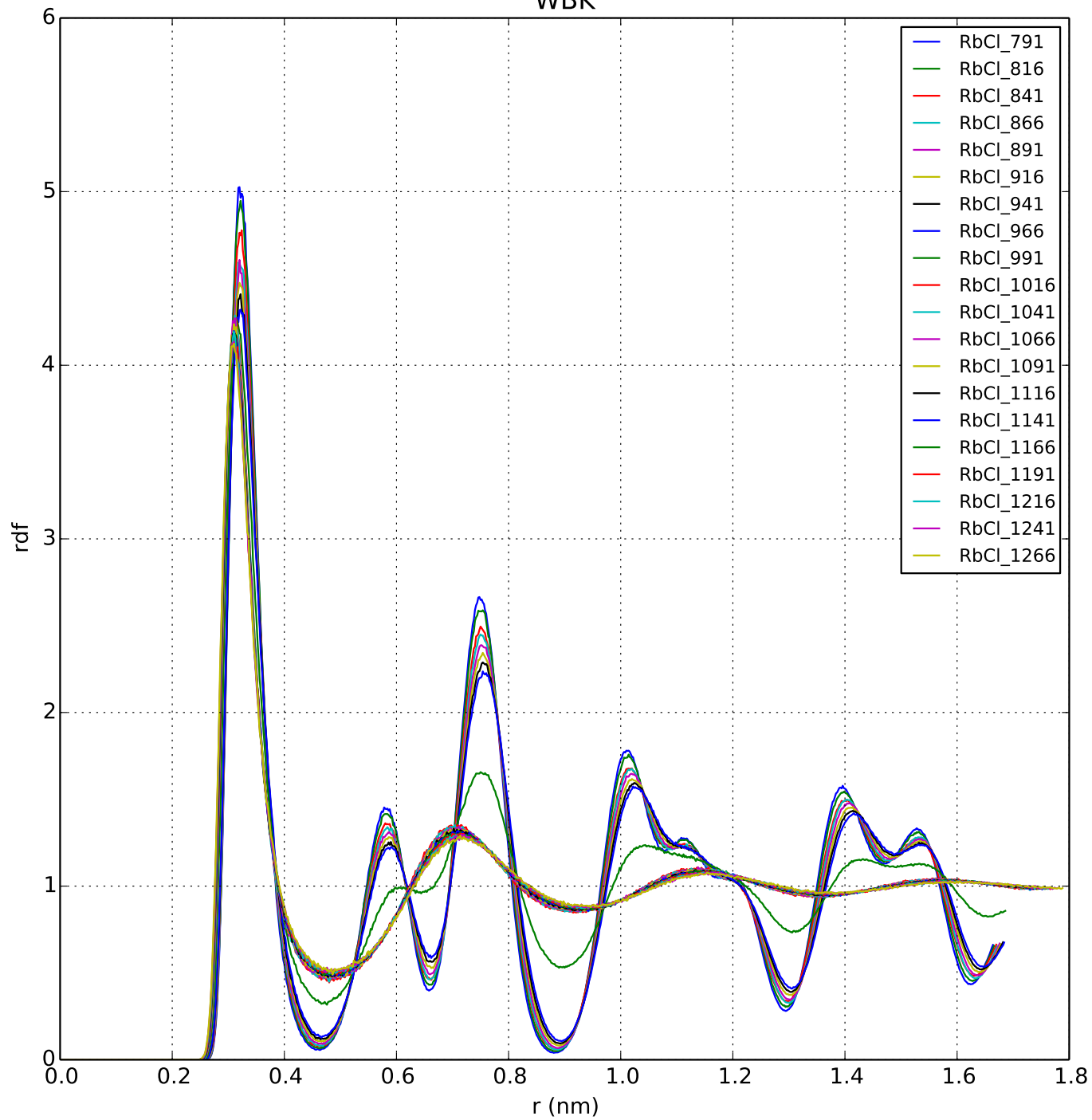


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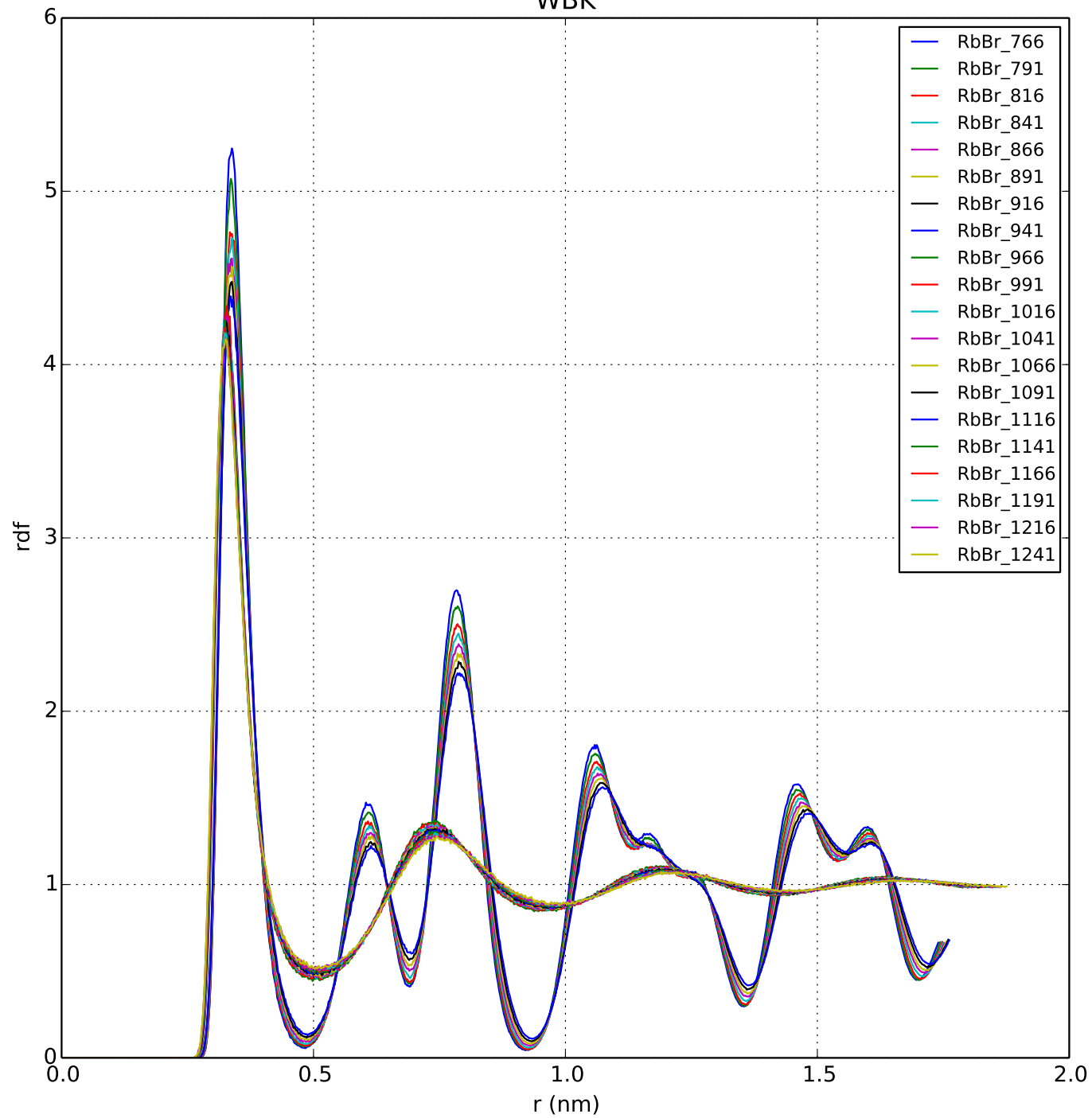




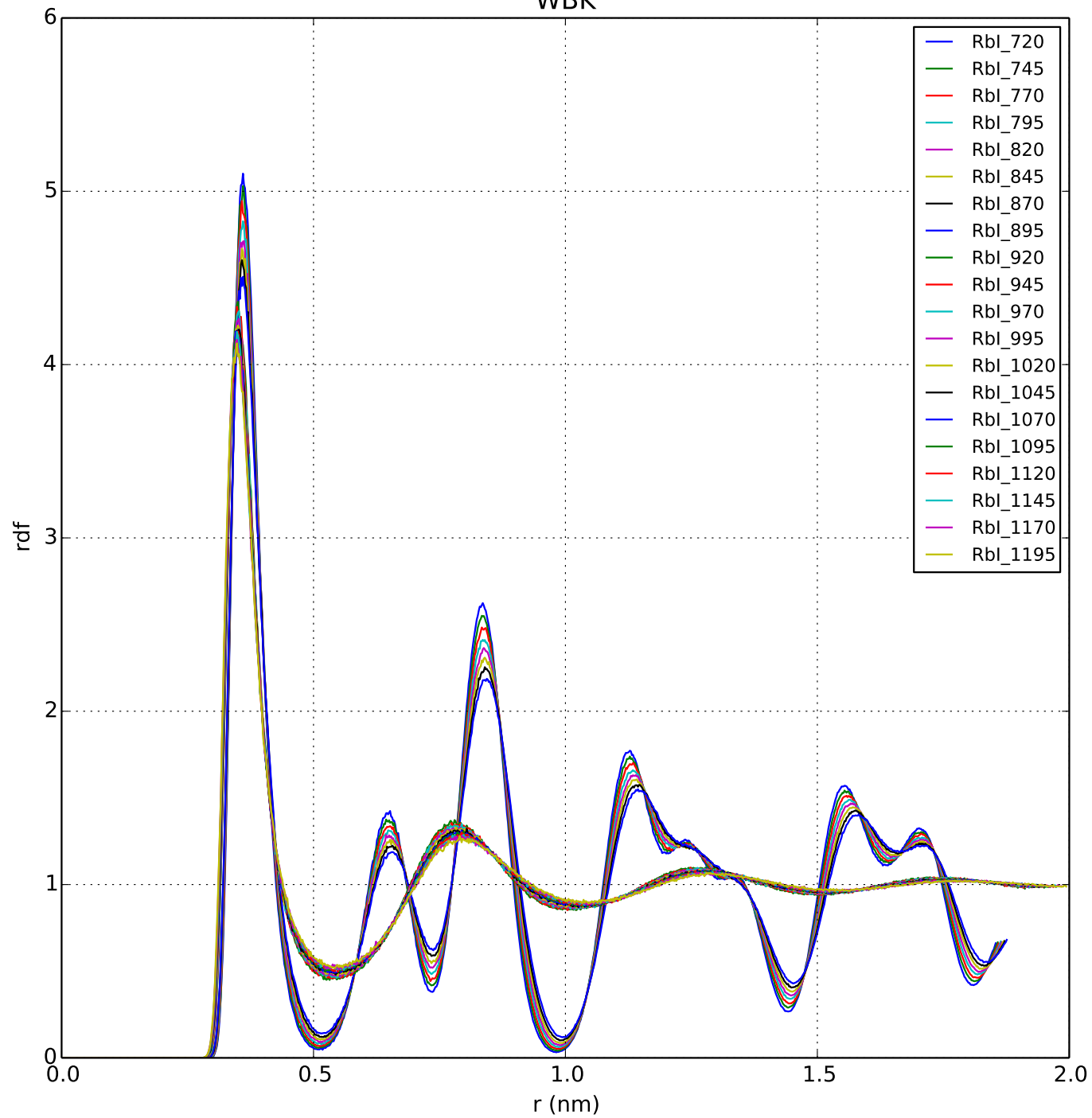
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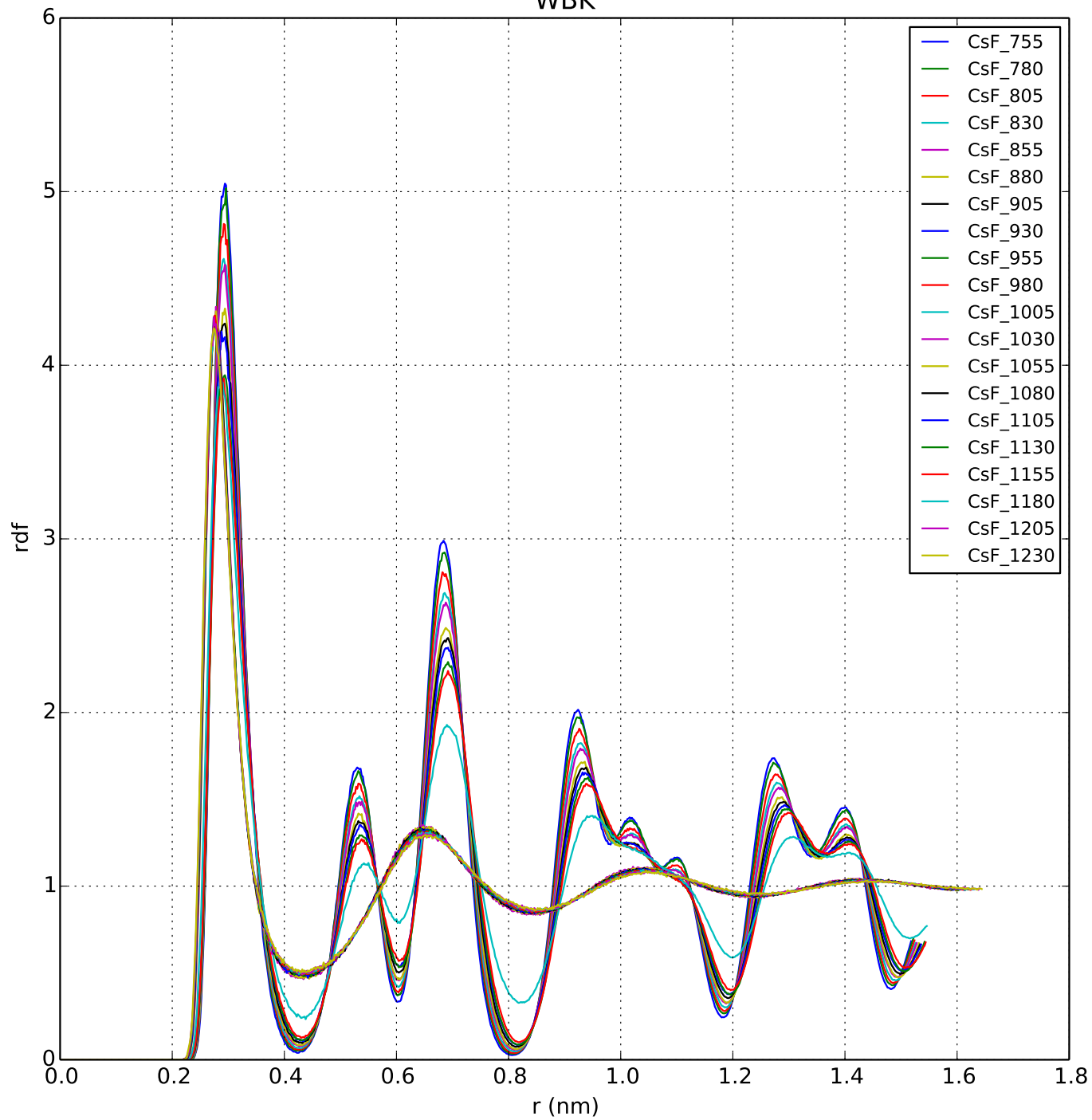
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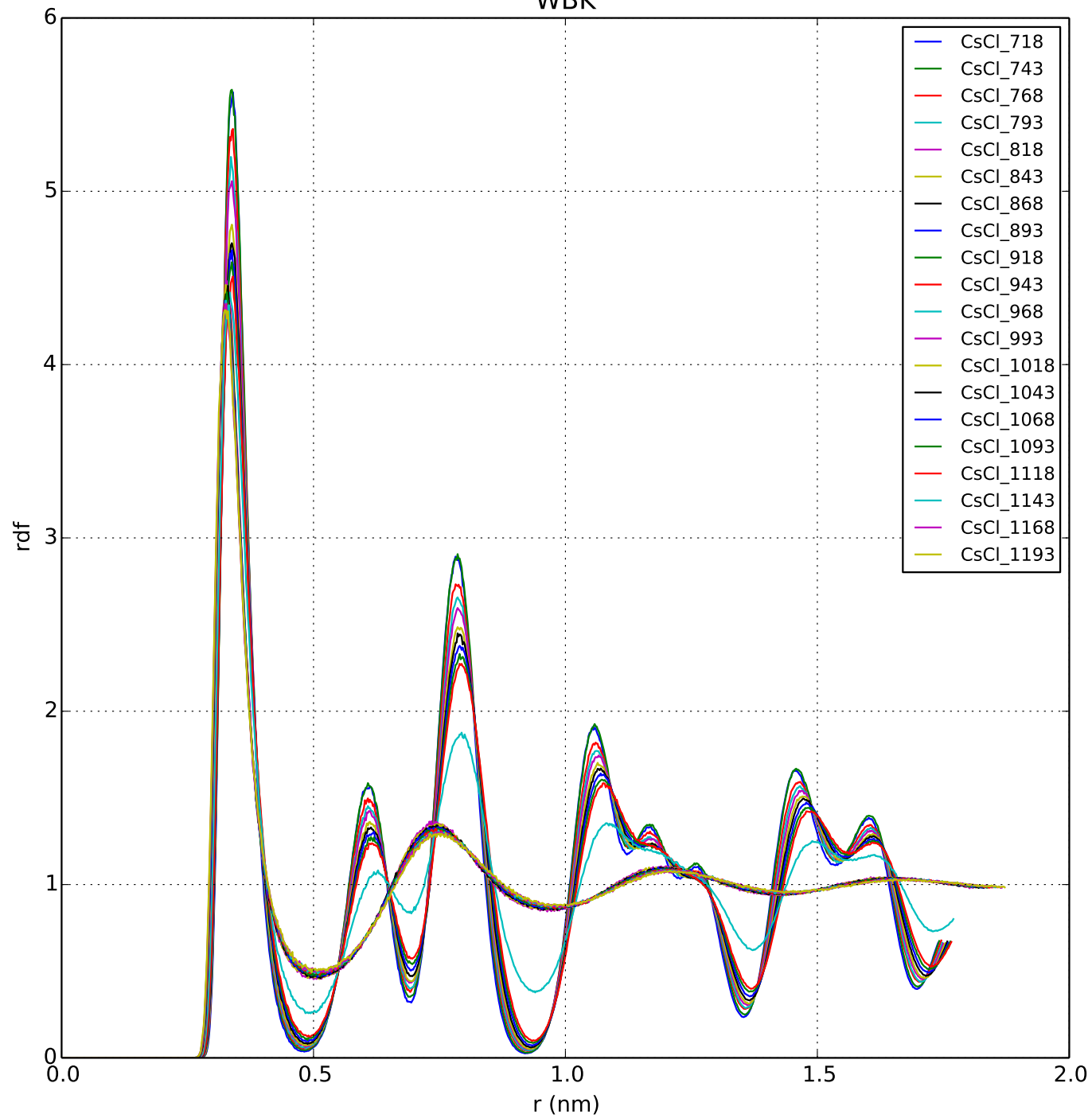
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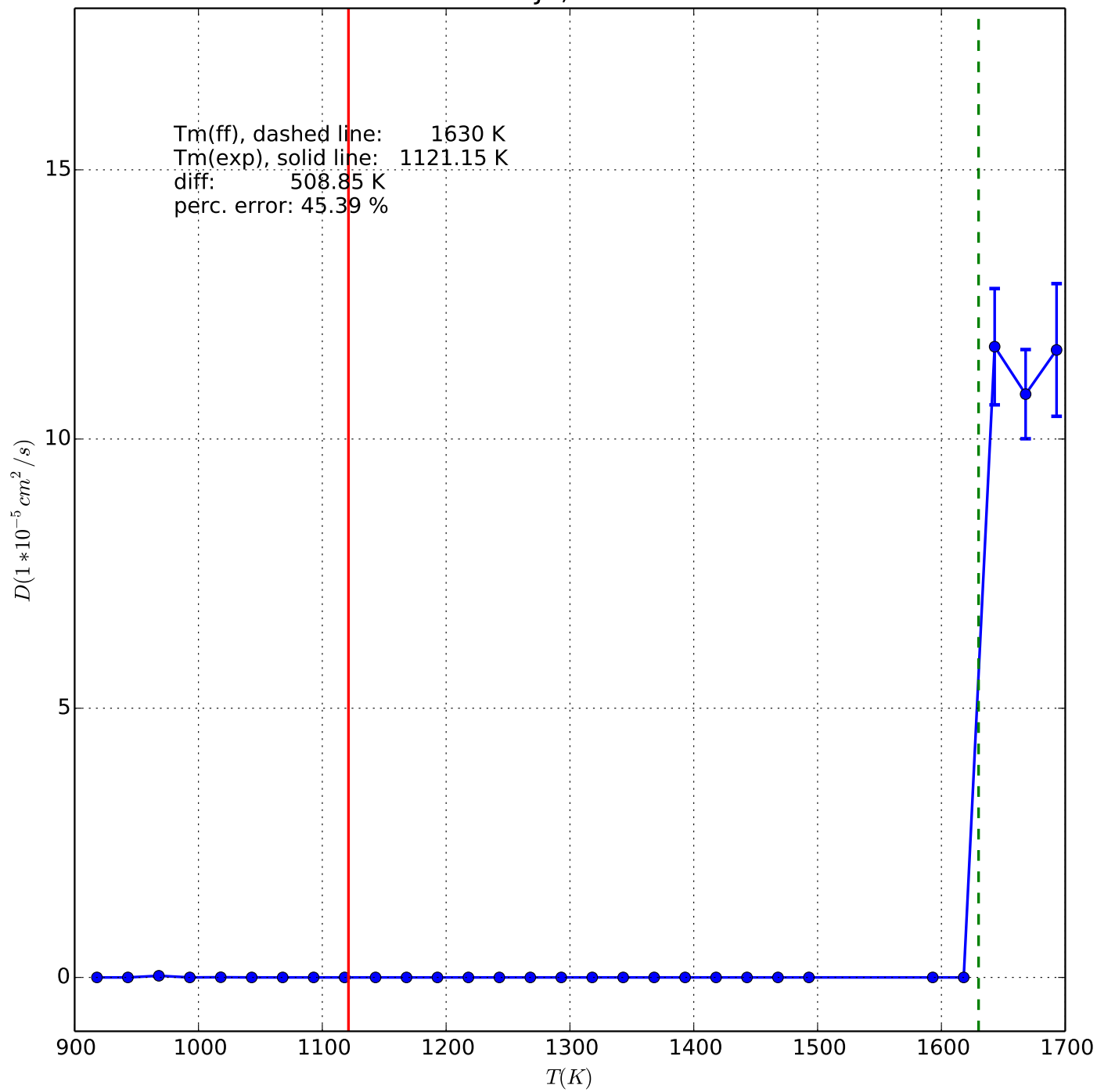
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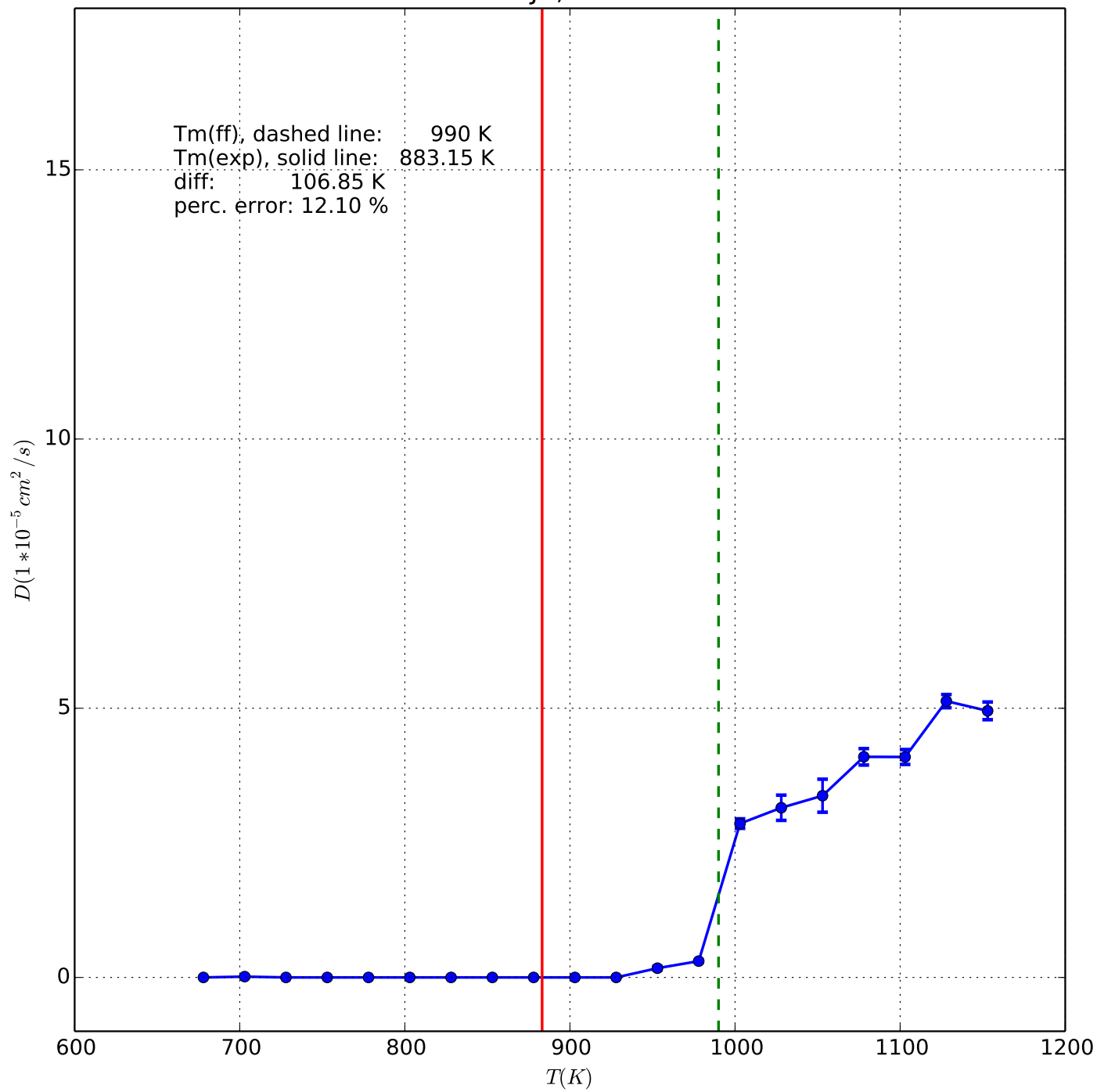
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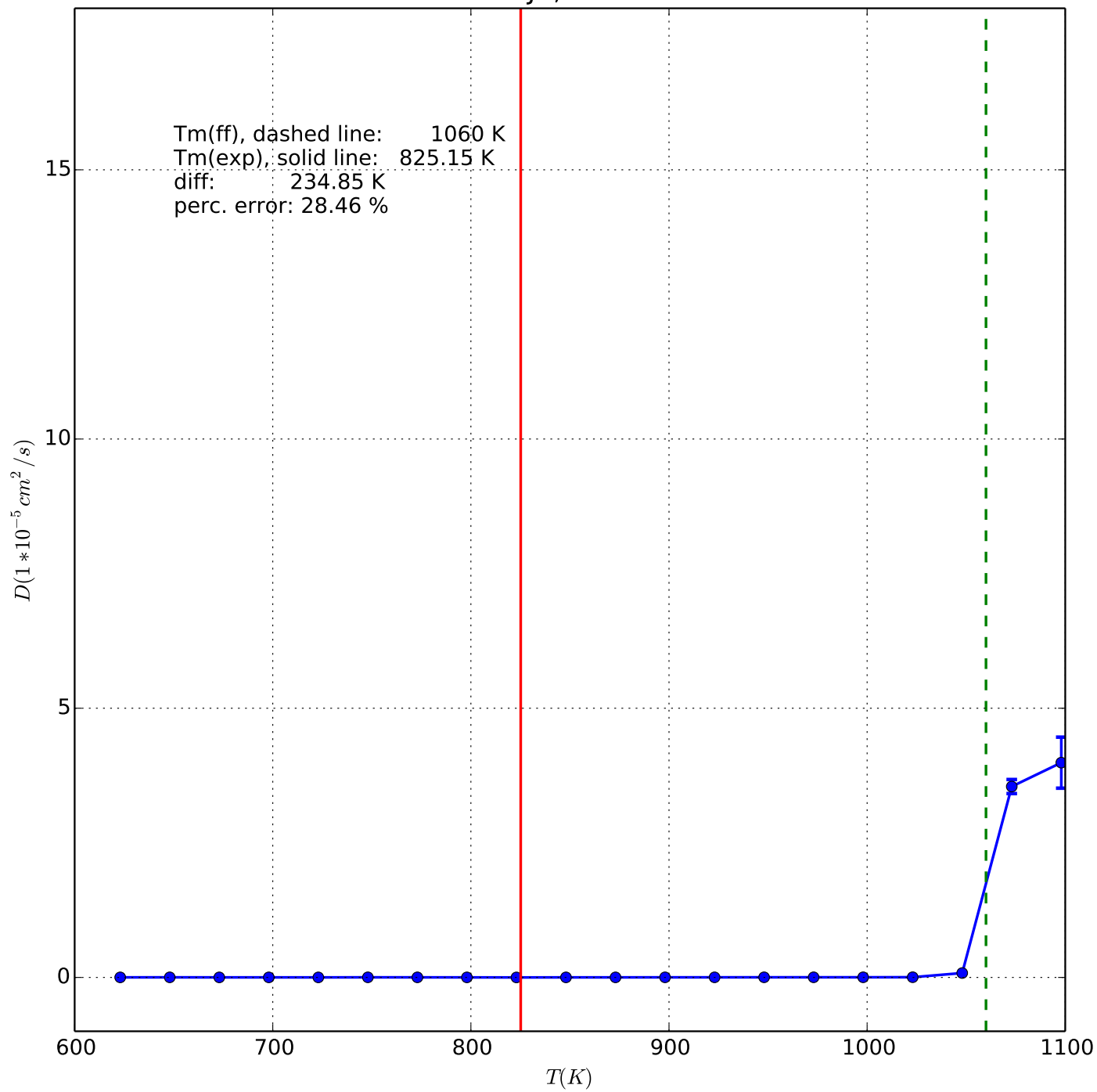
JC,LiF



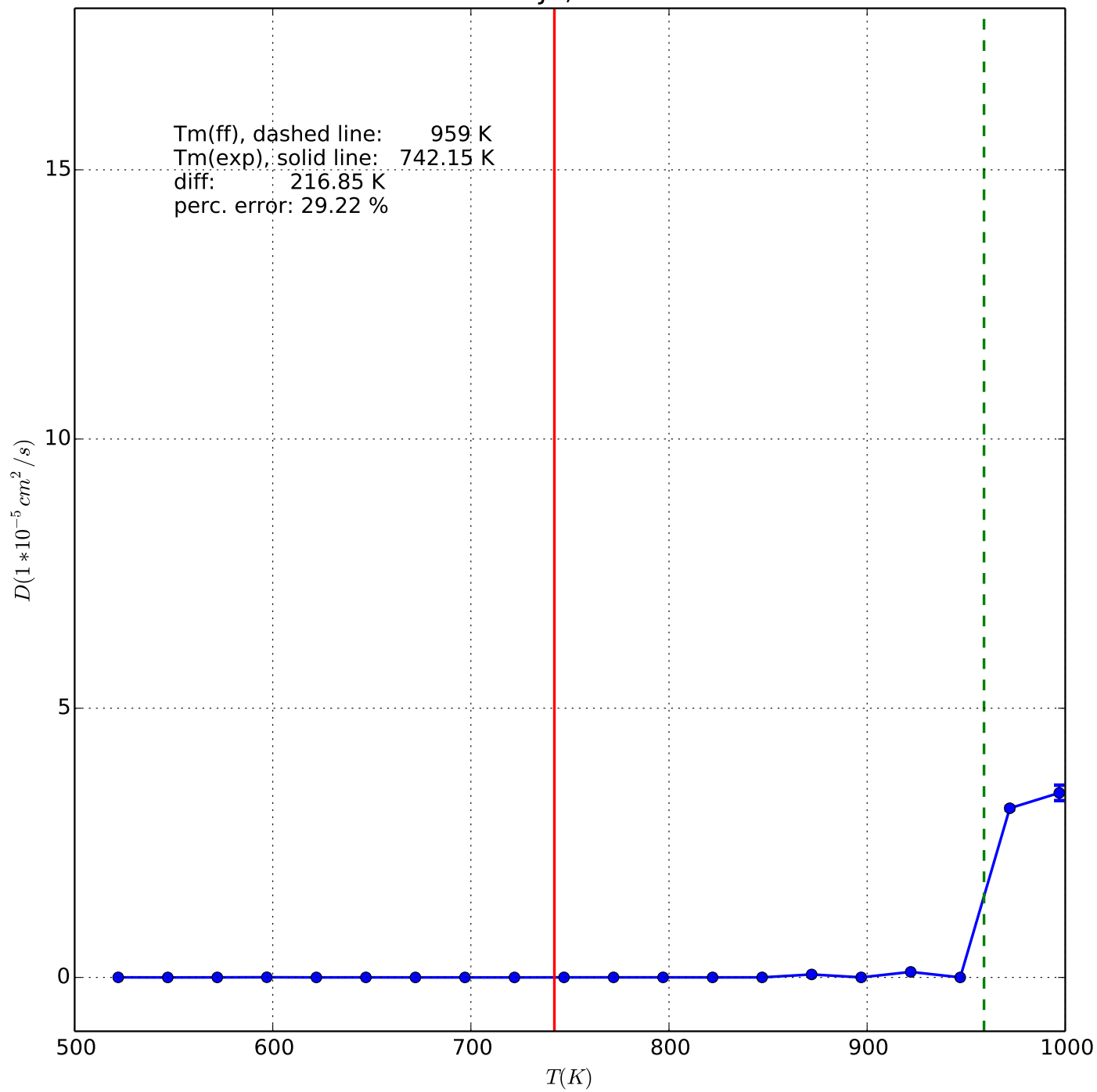
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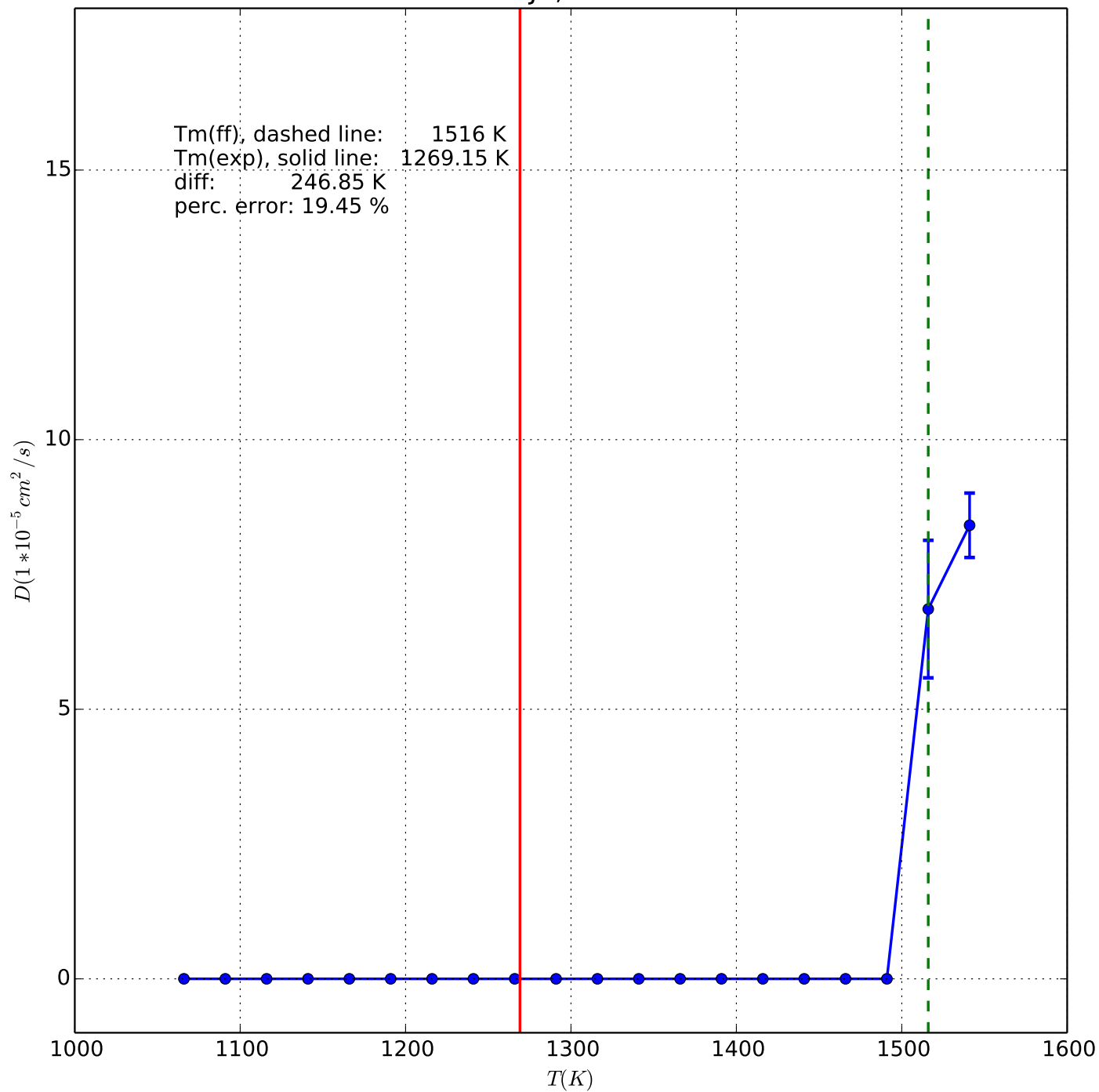
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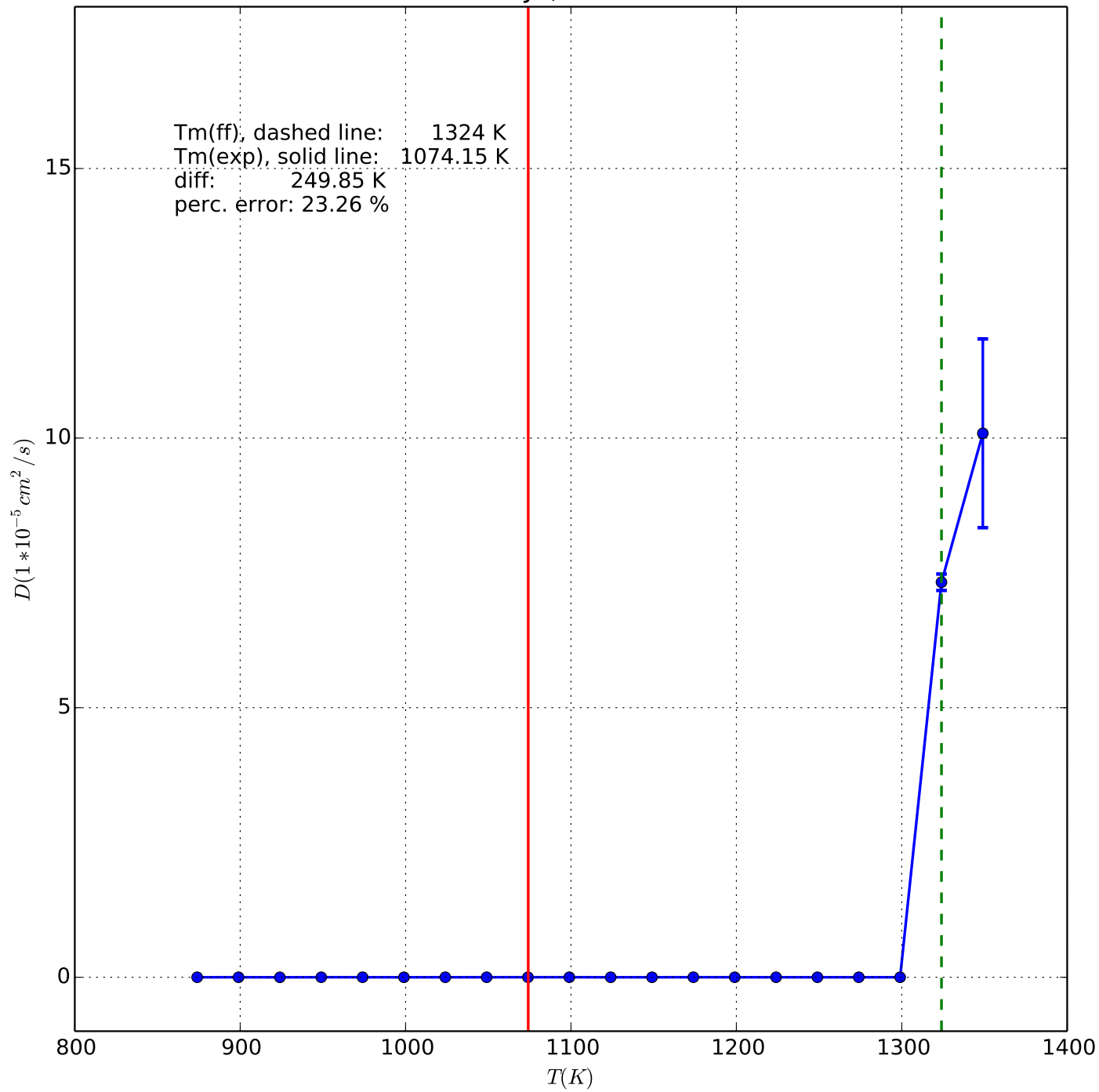
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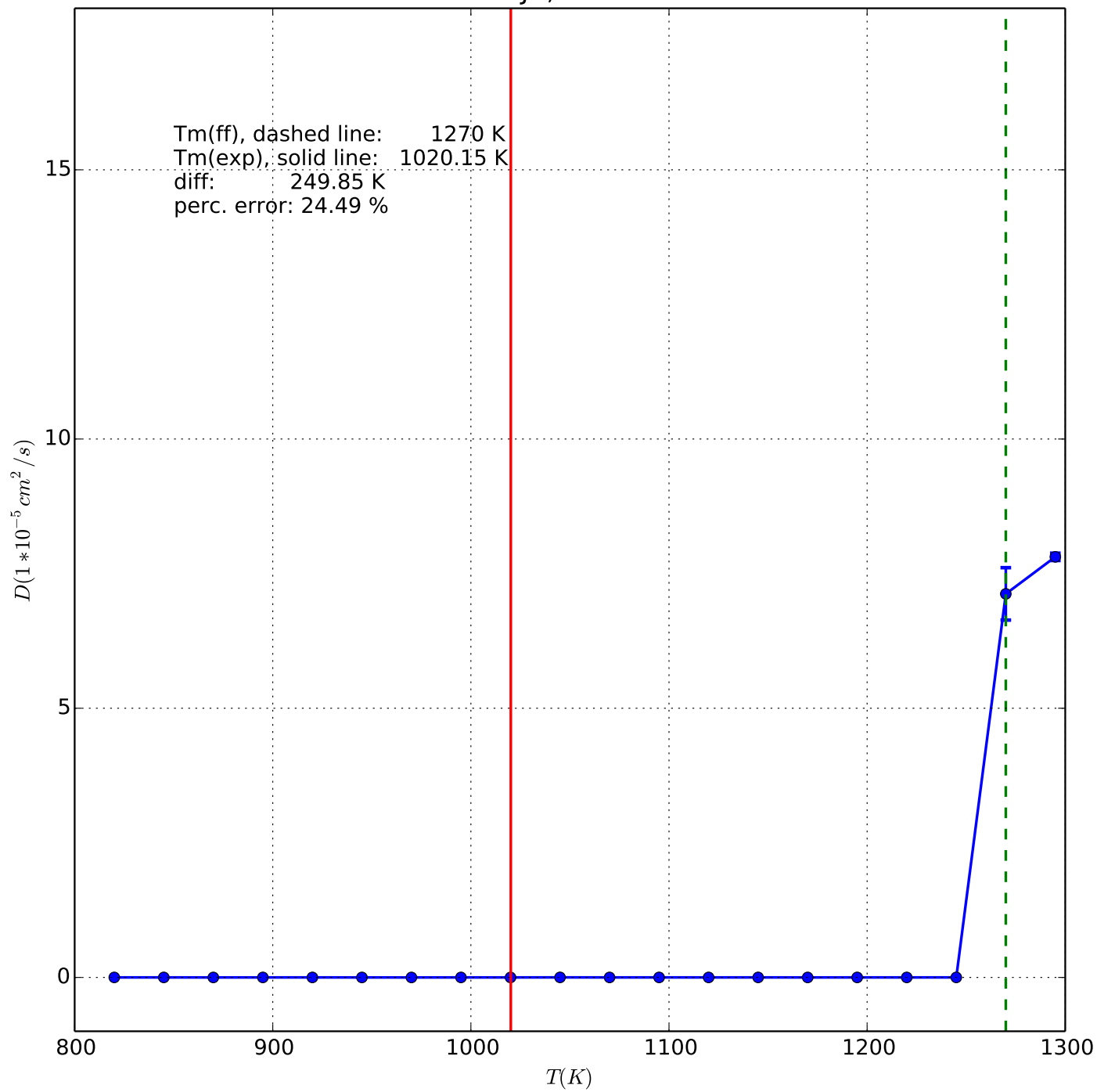
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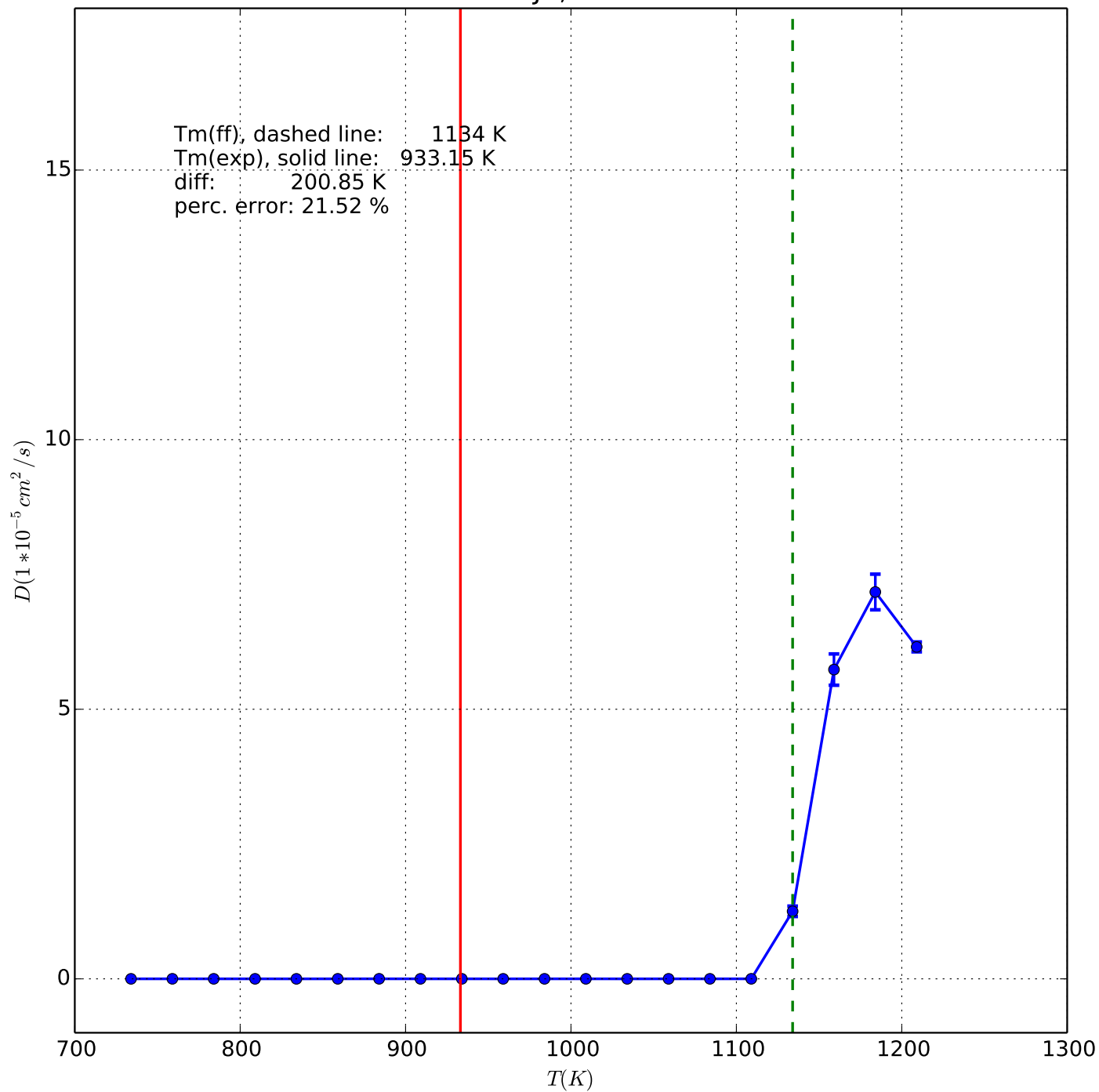
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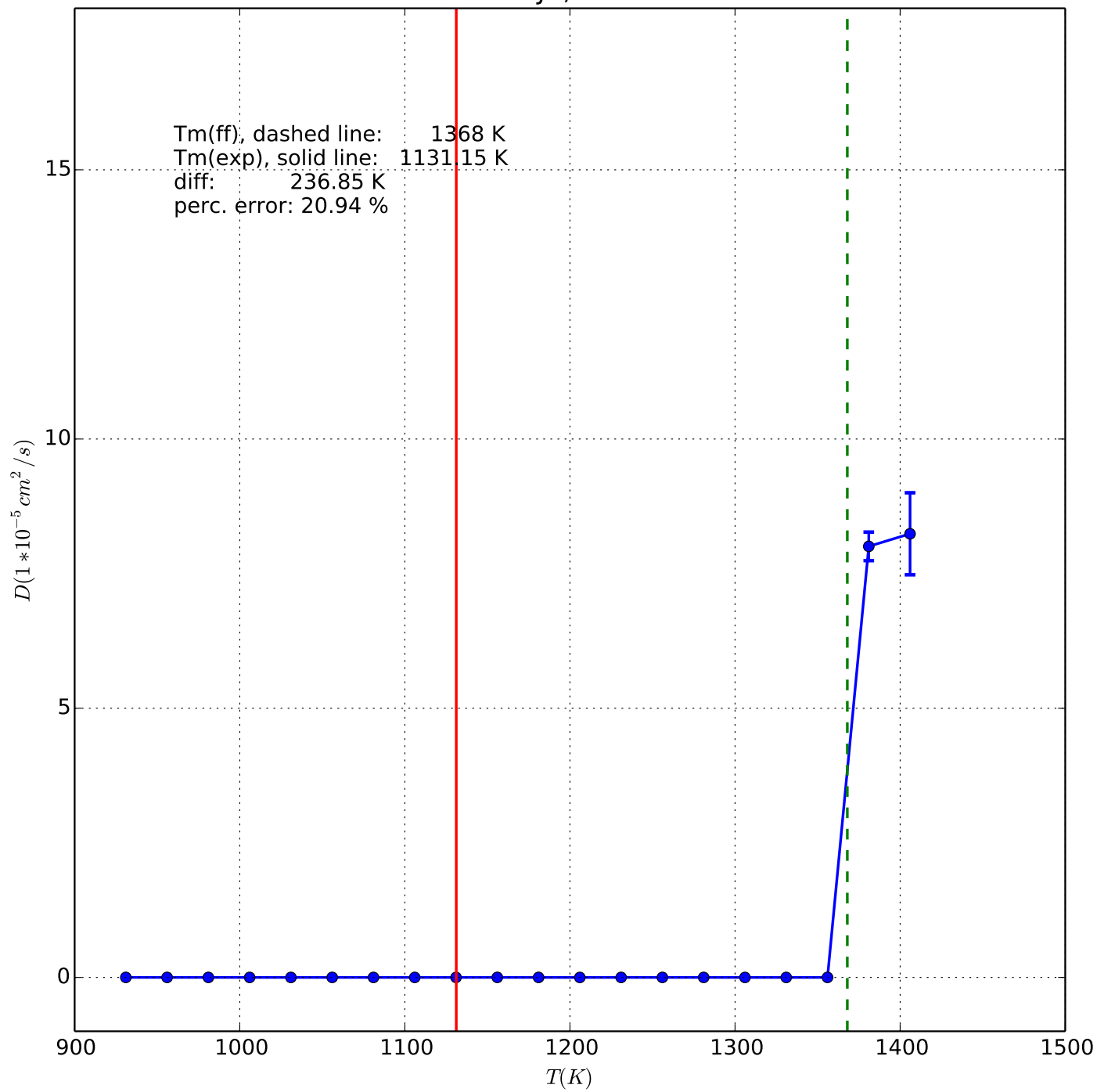
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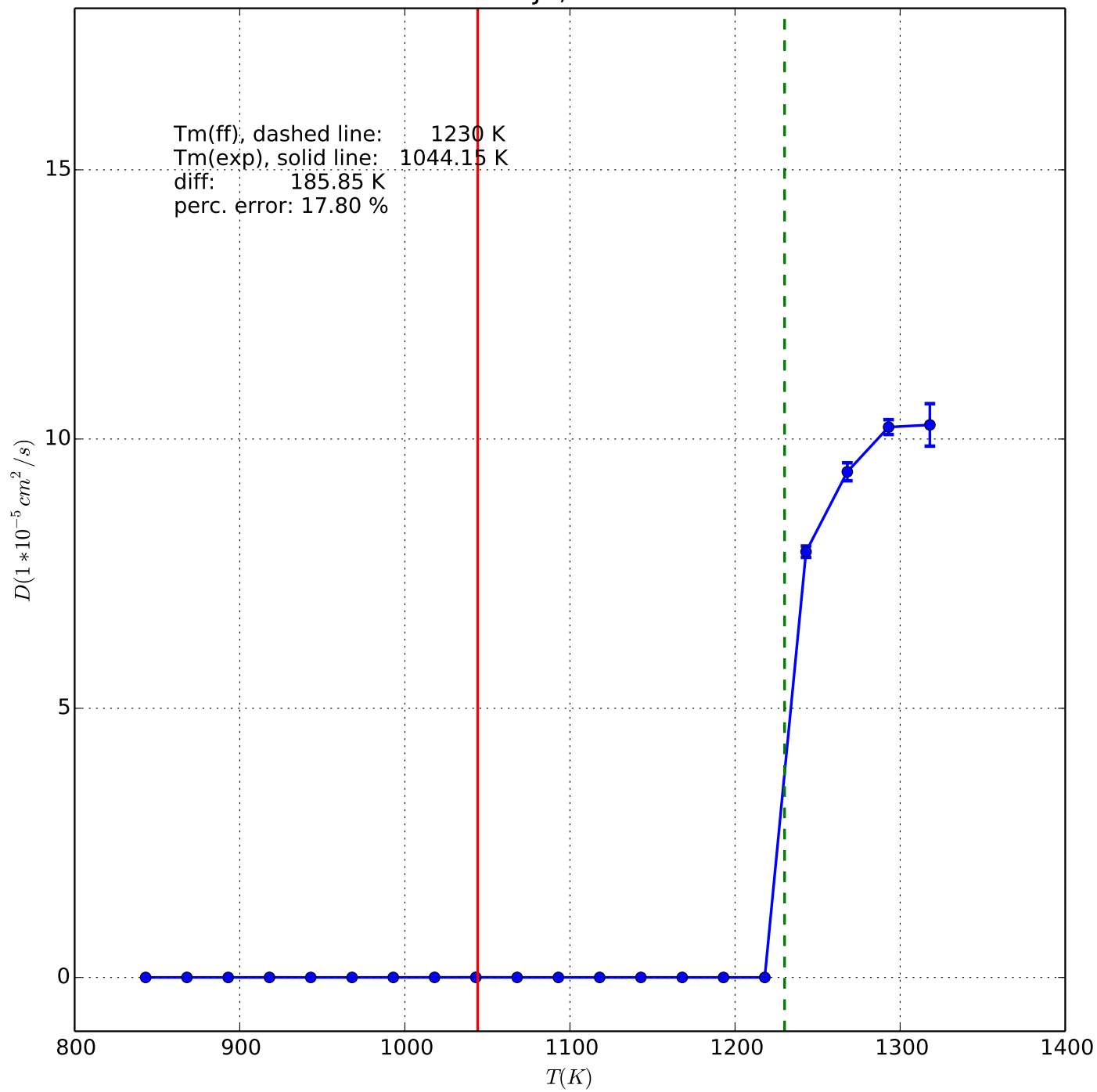
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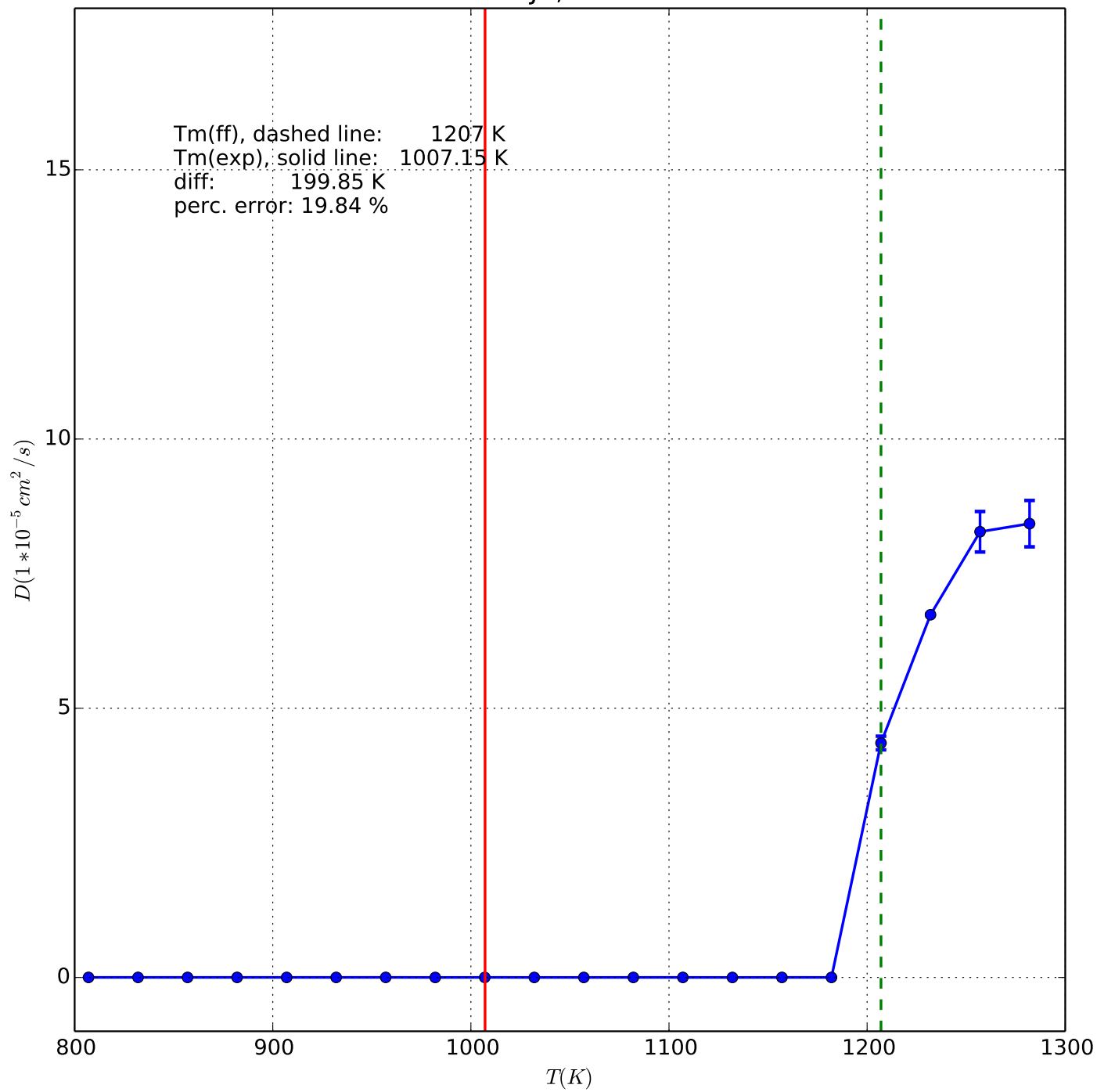
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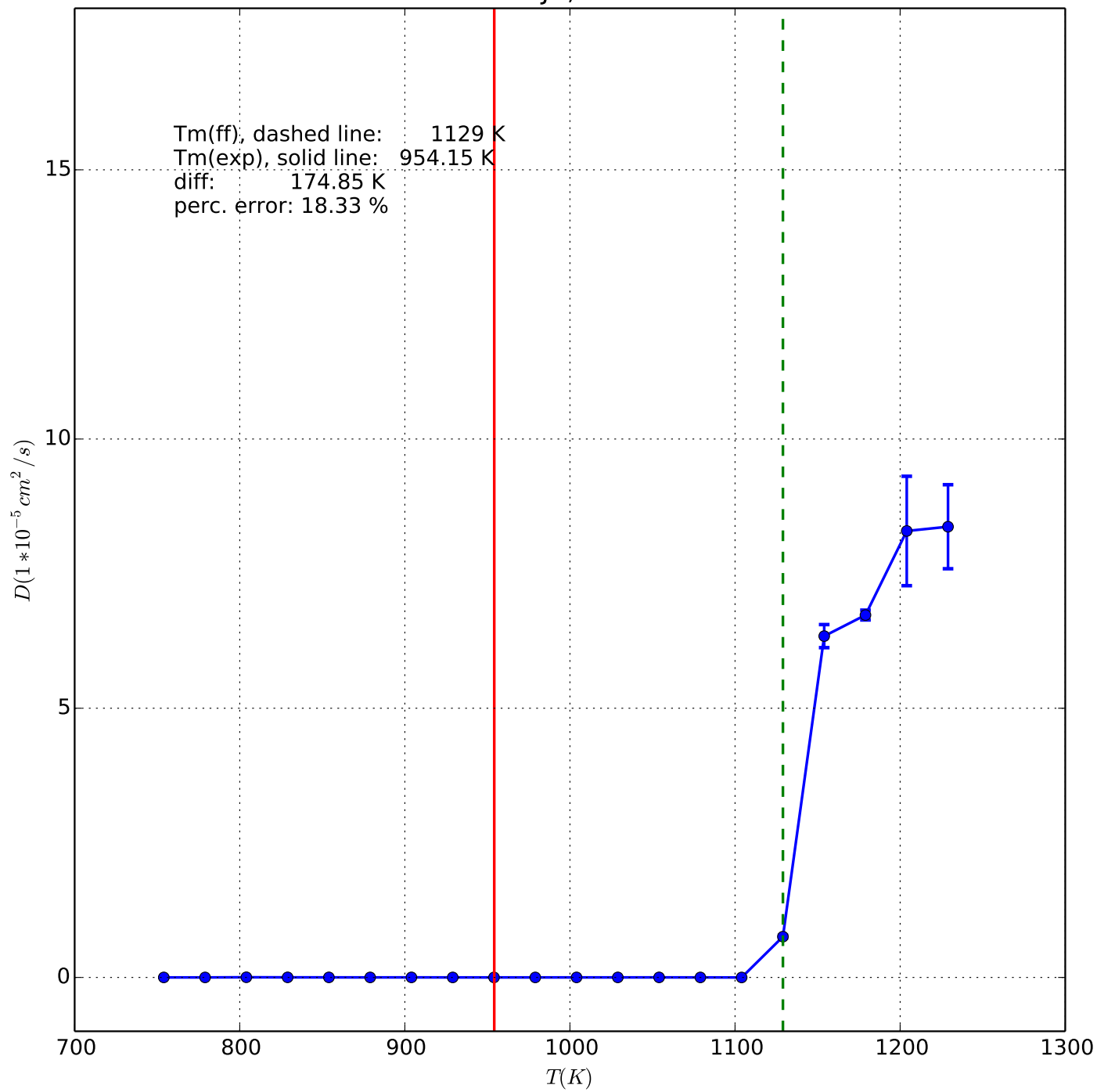
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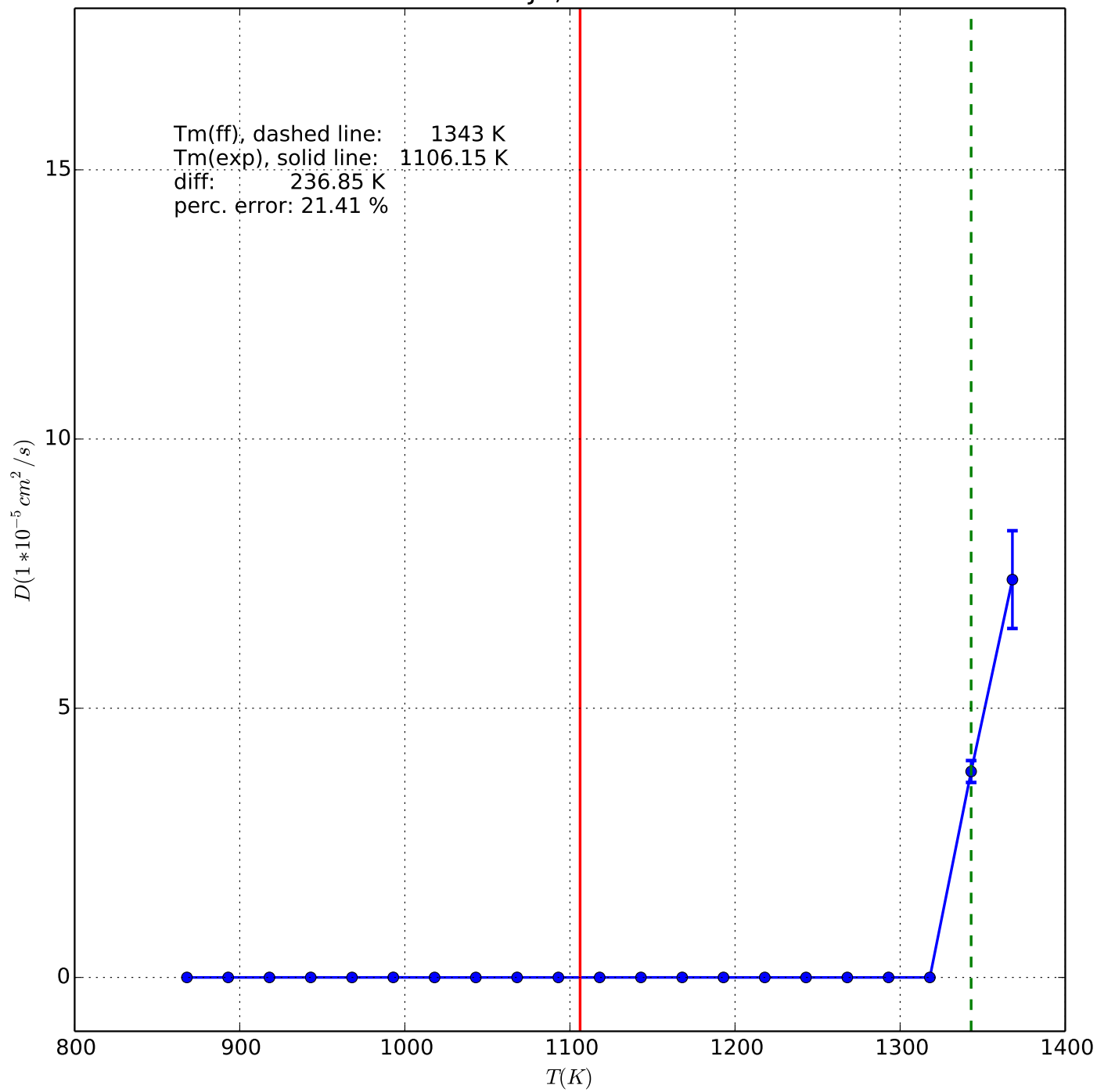
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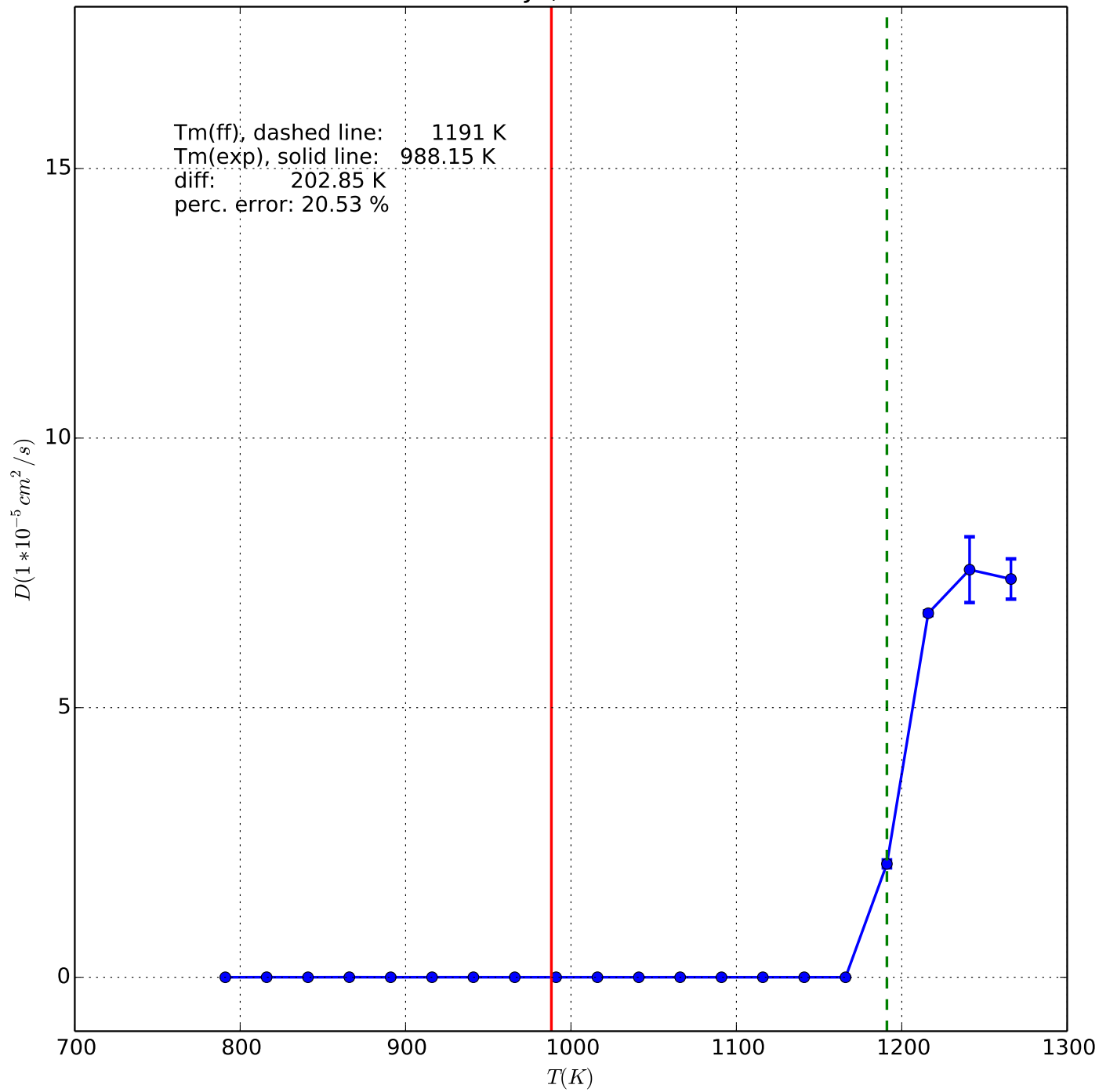
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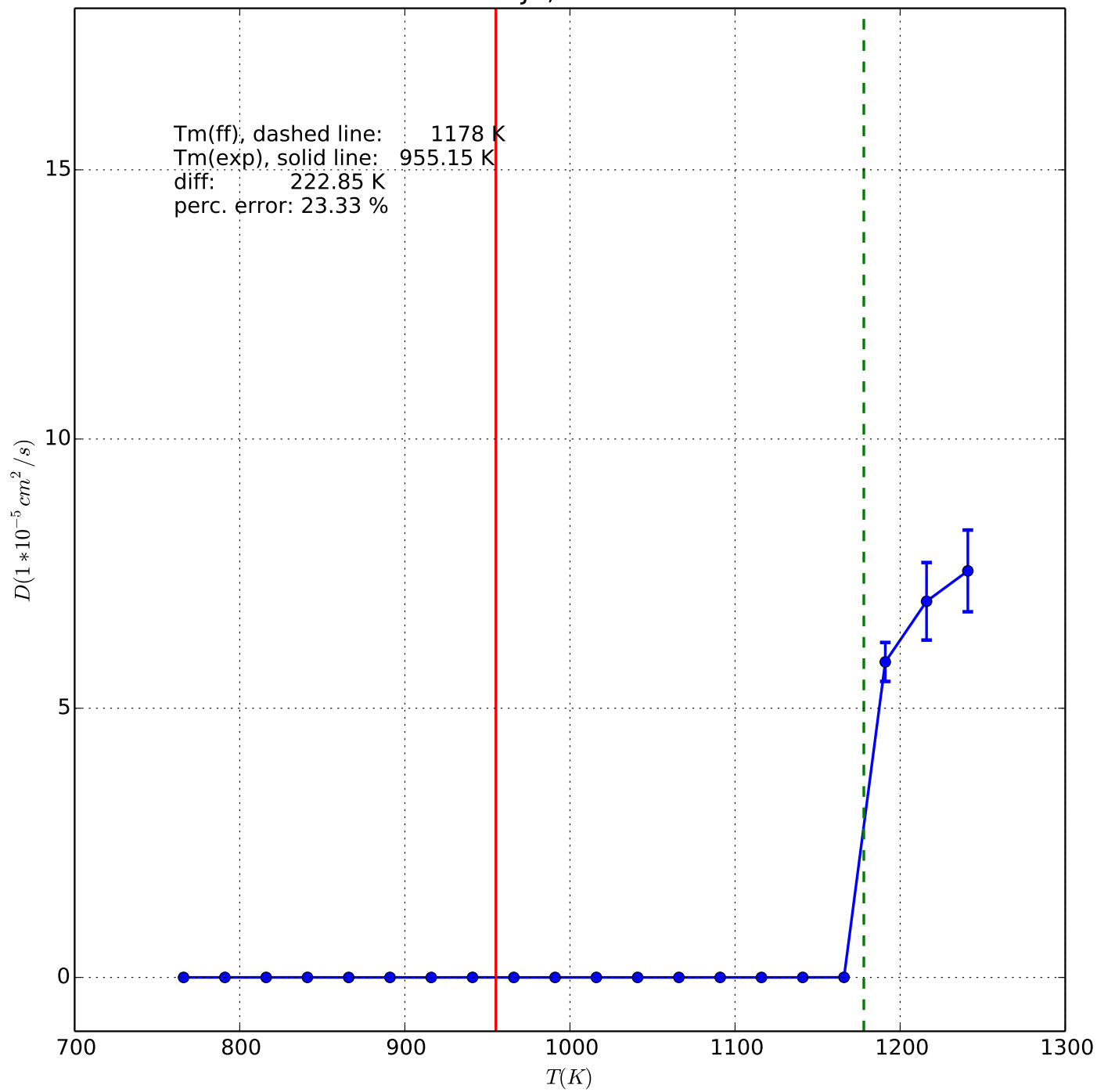
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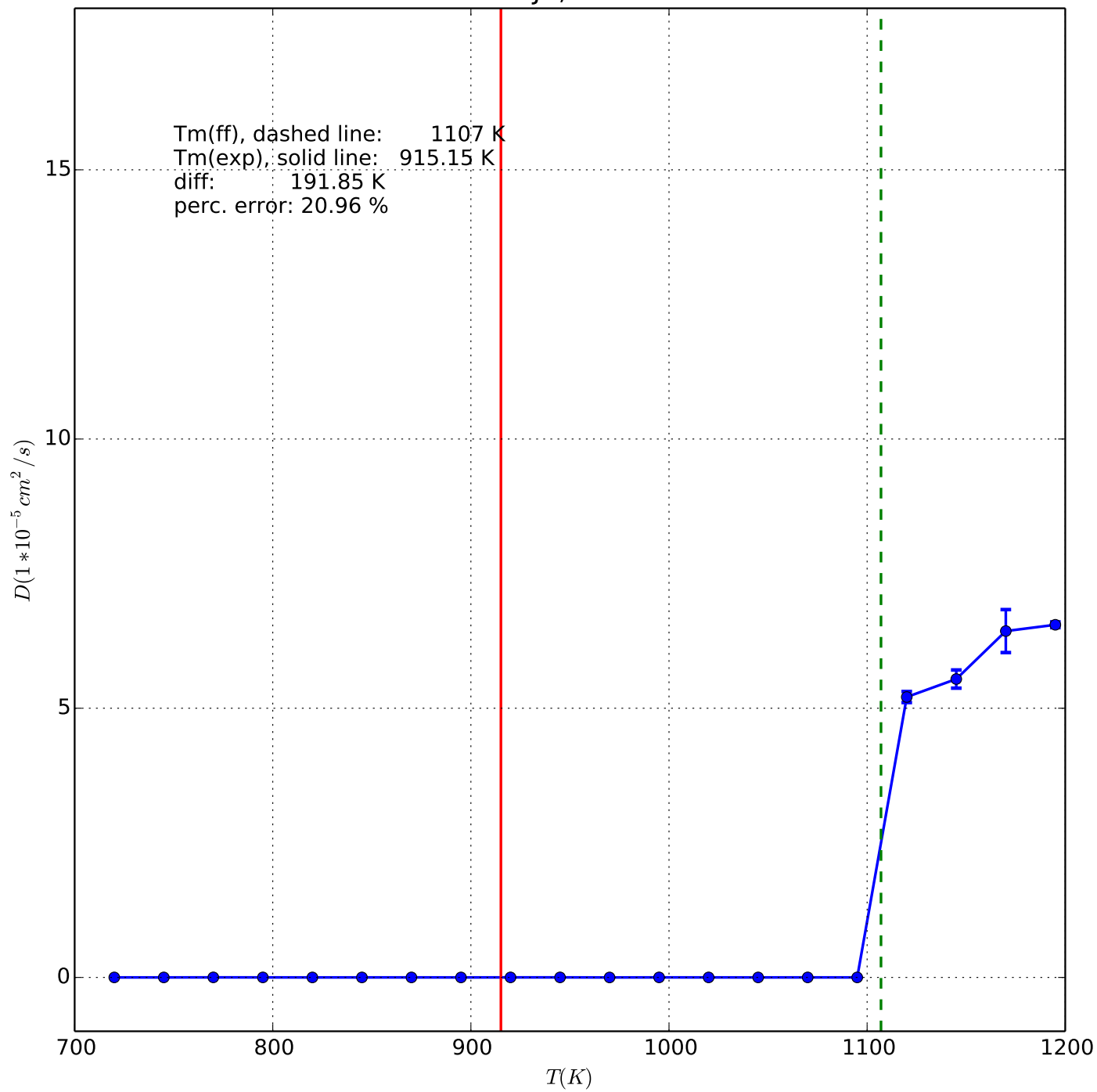
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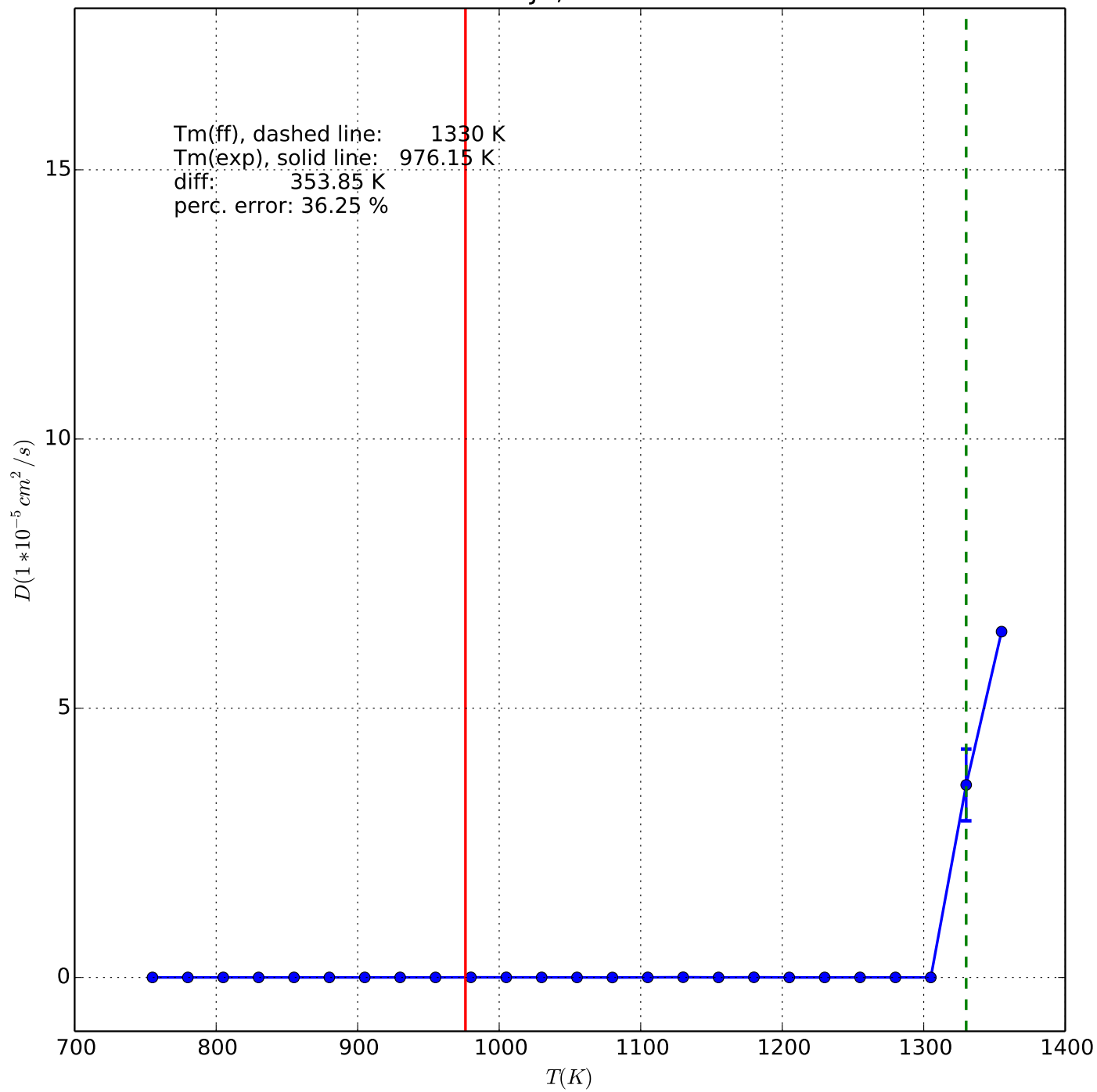
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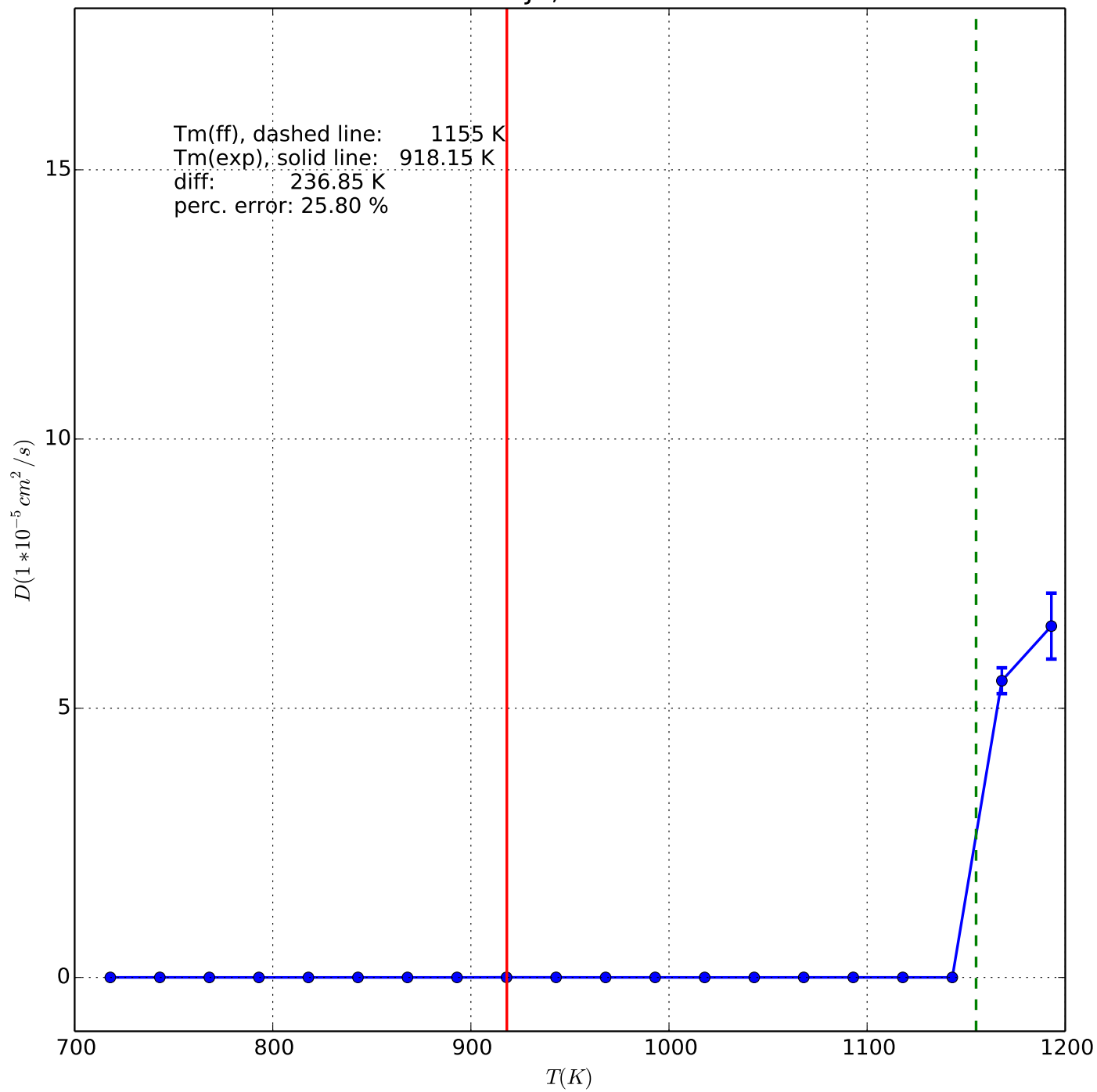
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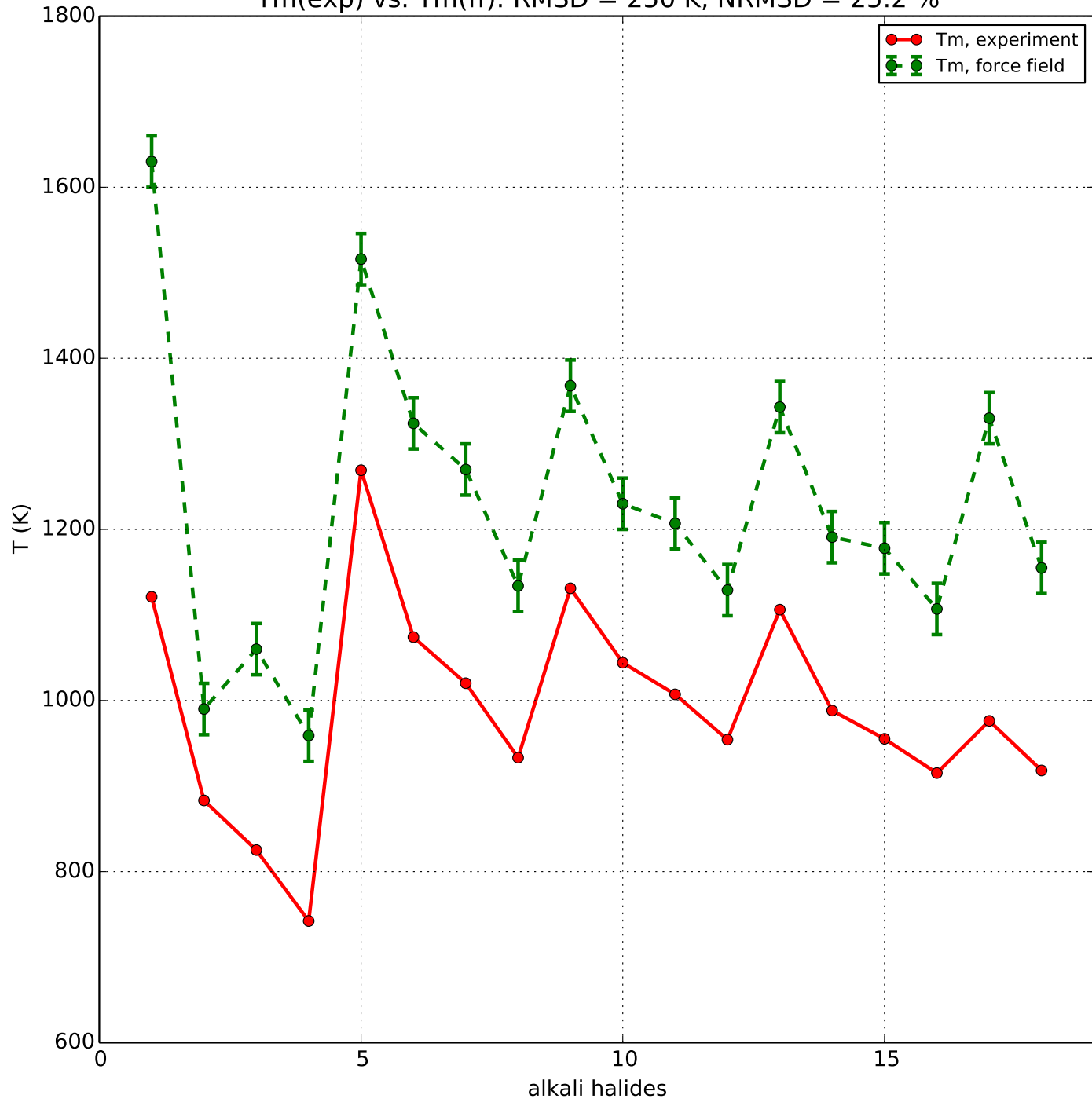
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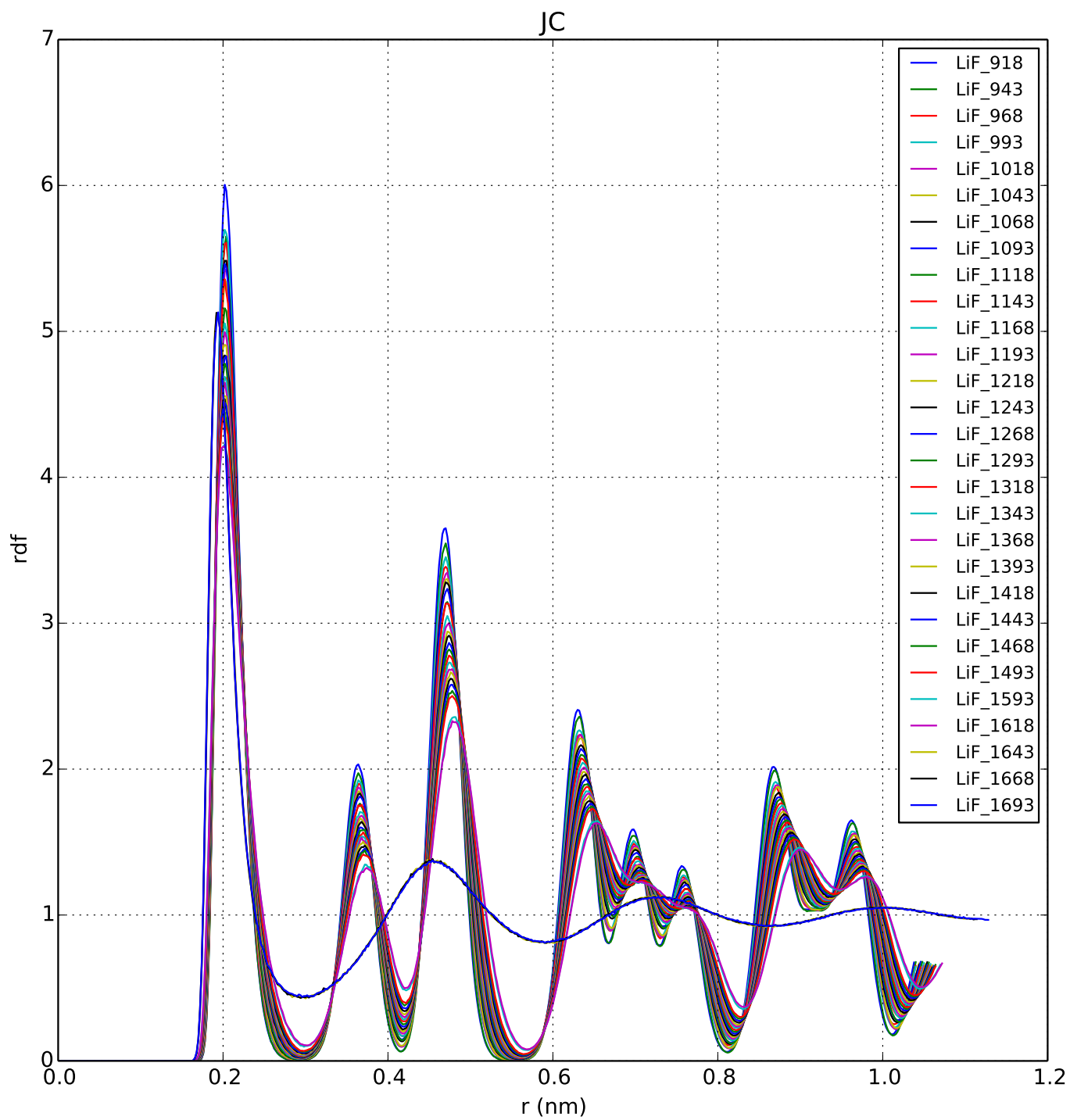


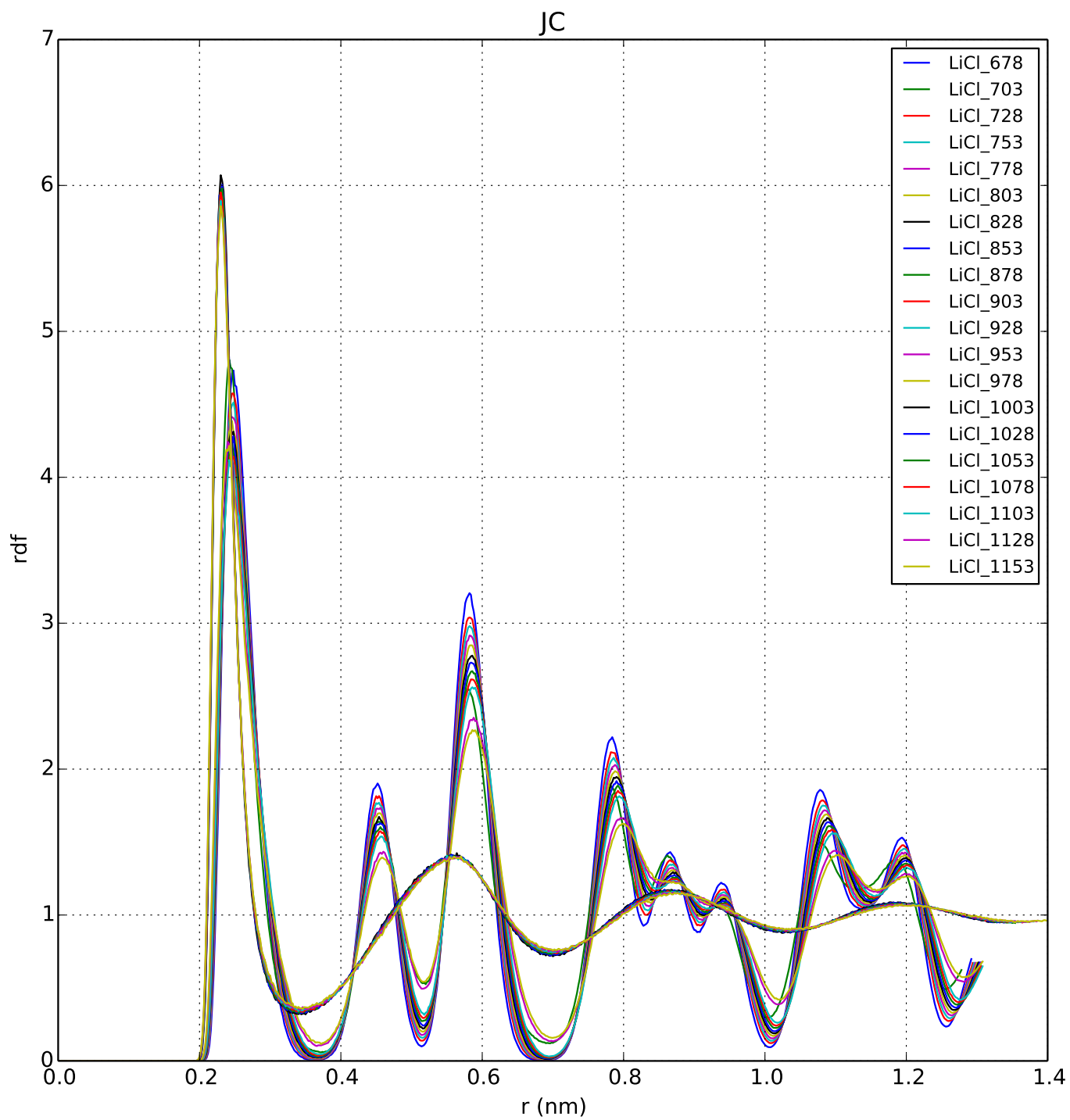
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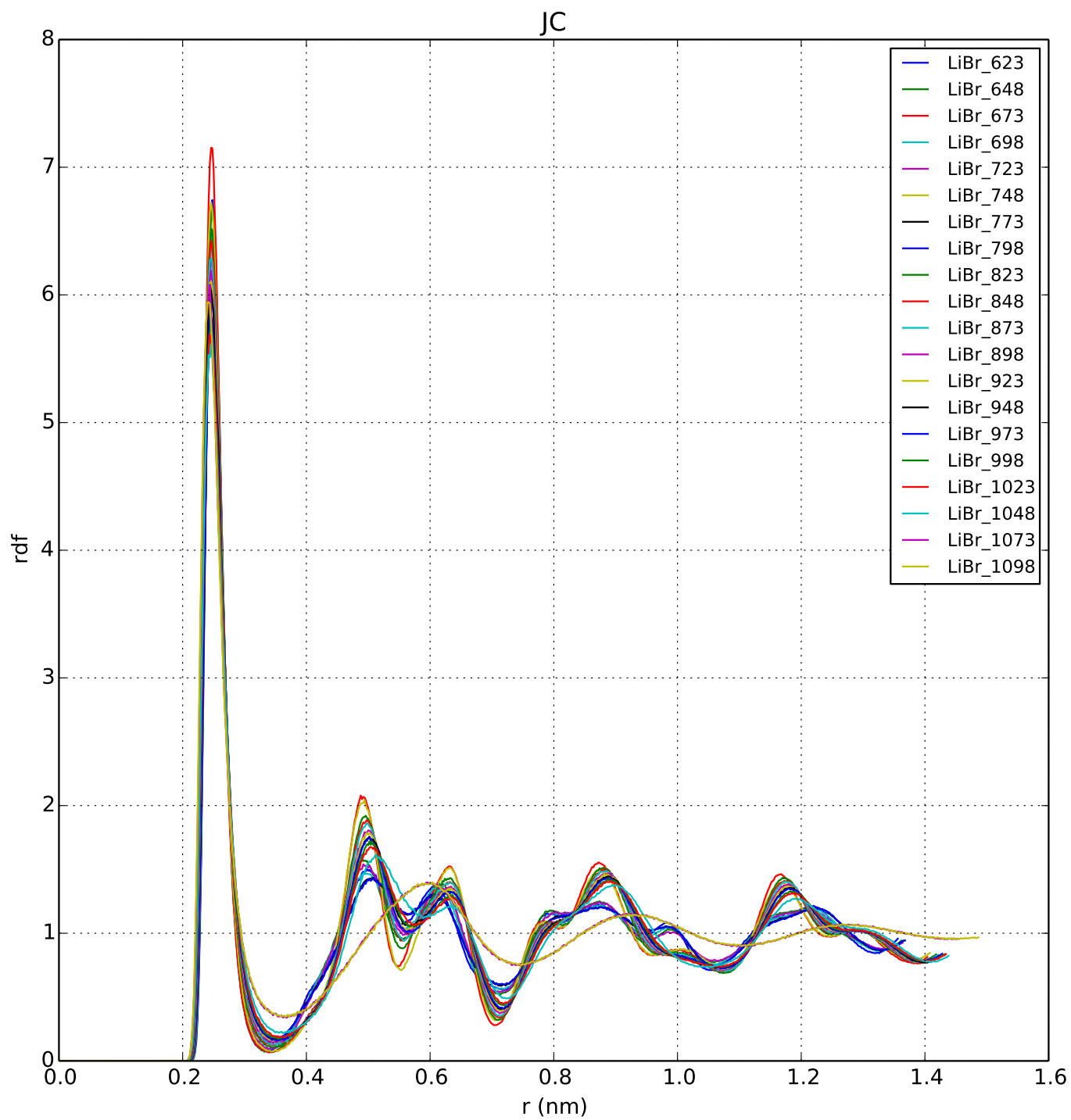


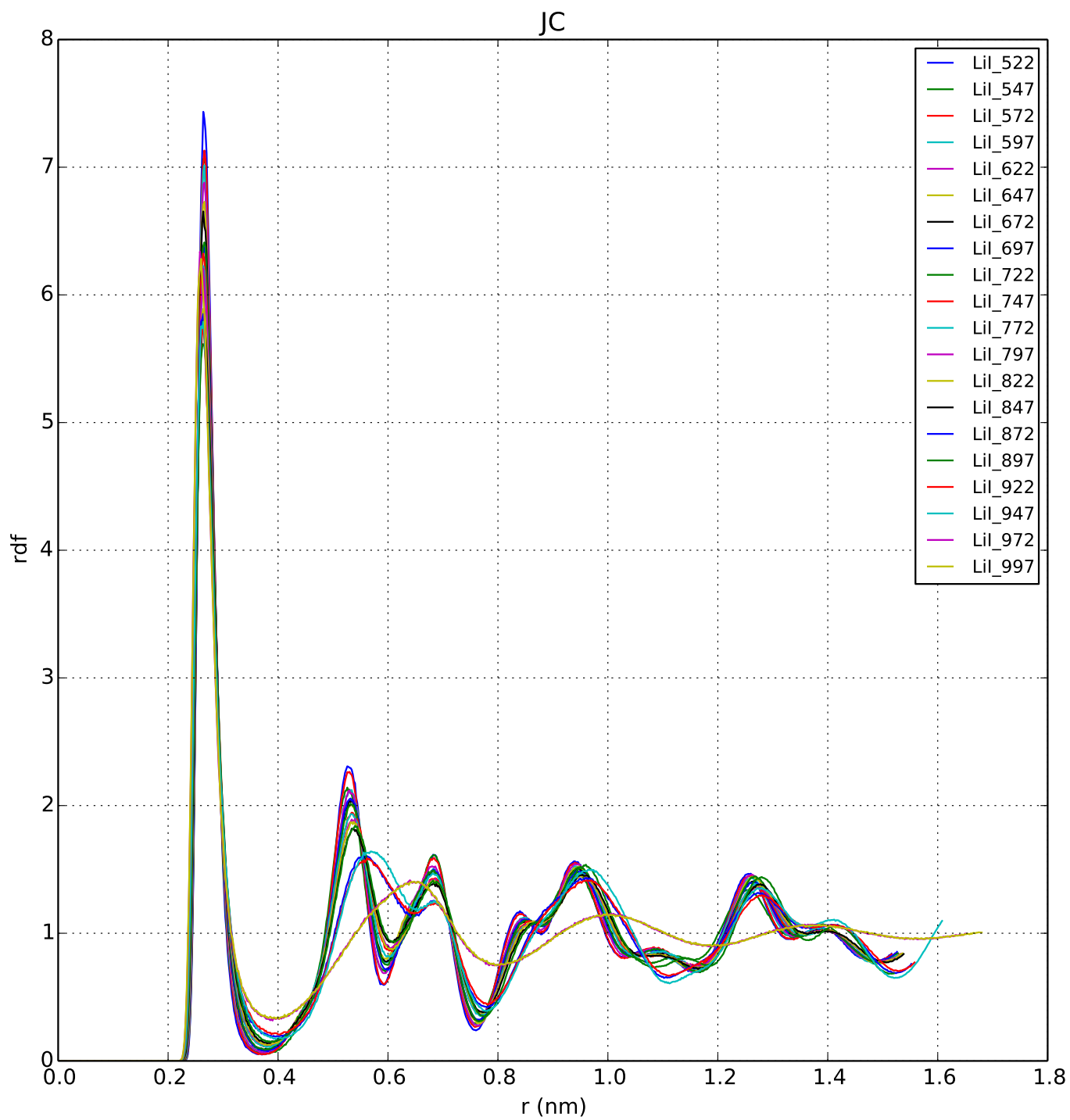
T_m(exp) vs. T_m(ff): RMSD = 250 K, NRMSD = 25.2 %

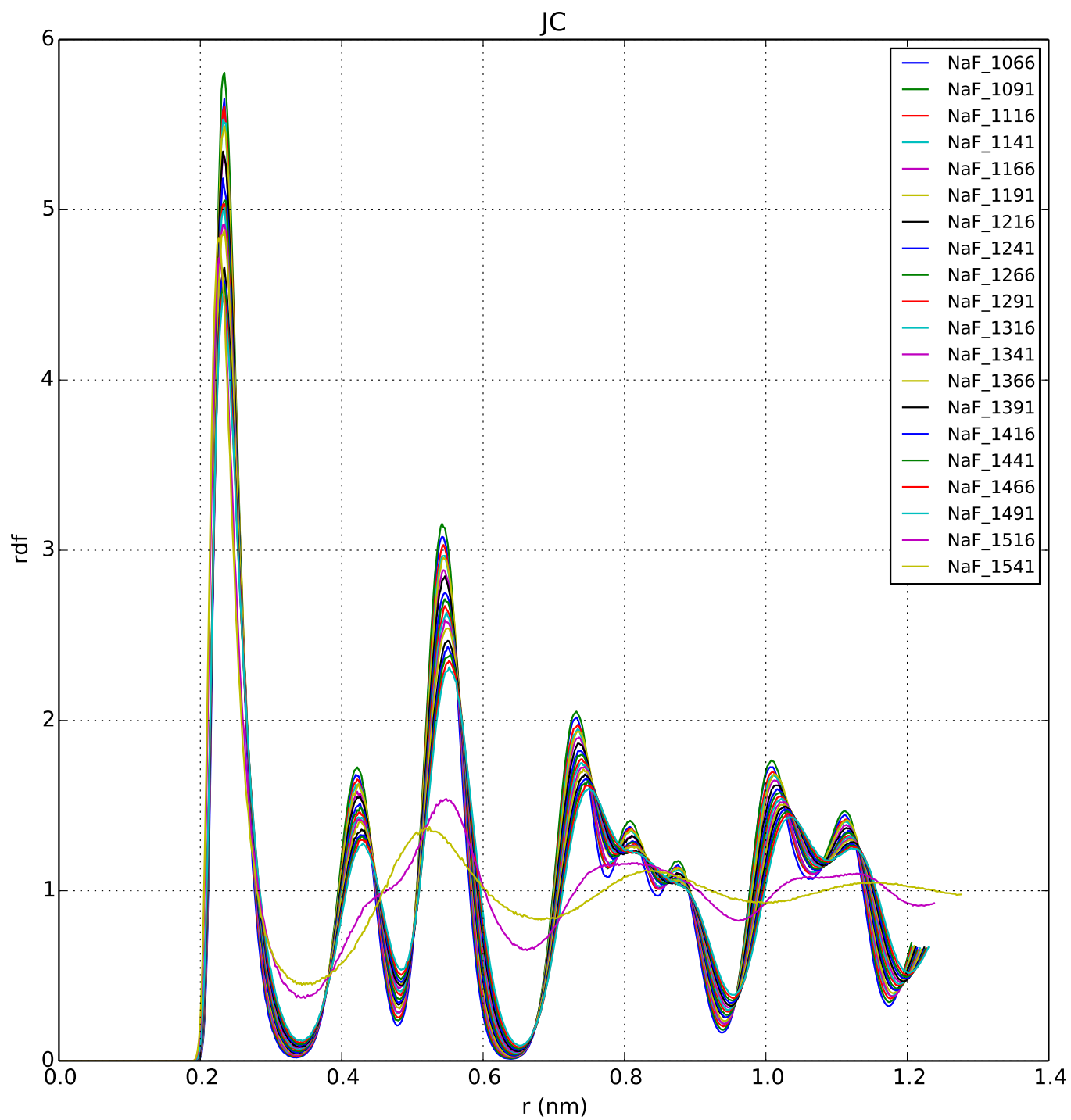


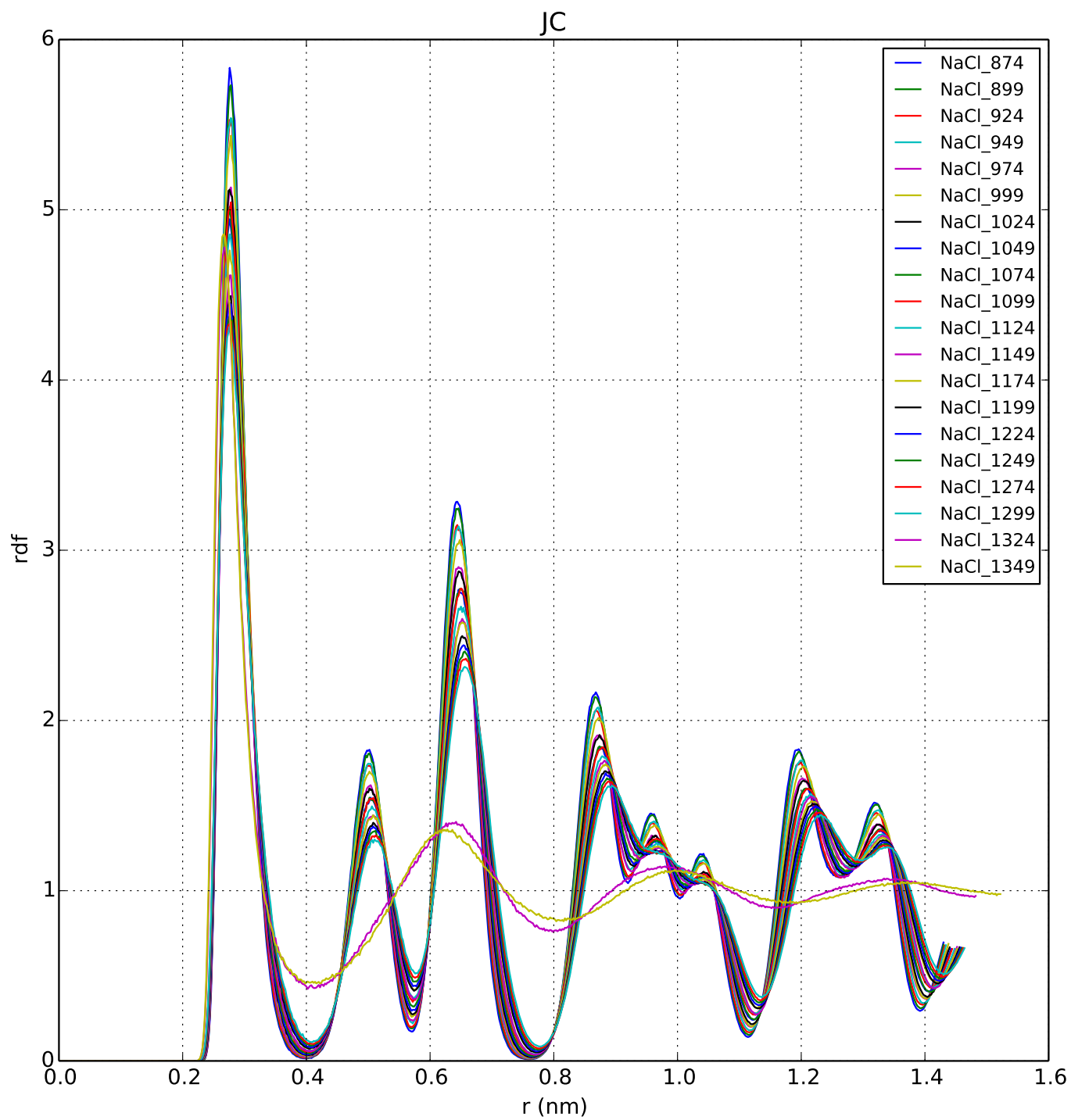


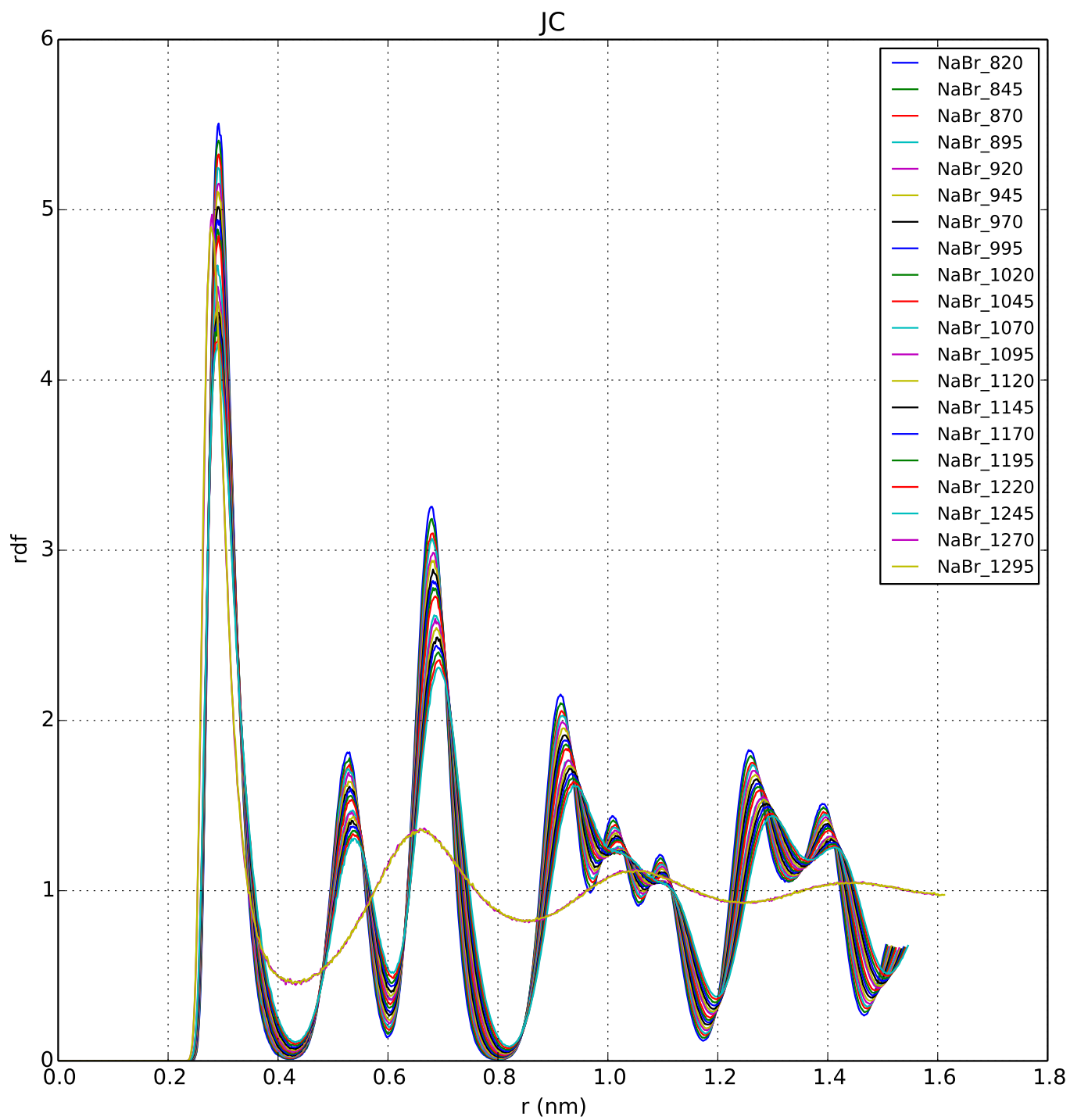


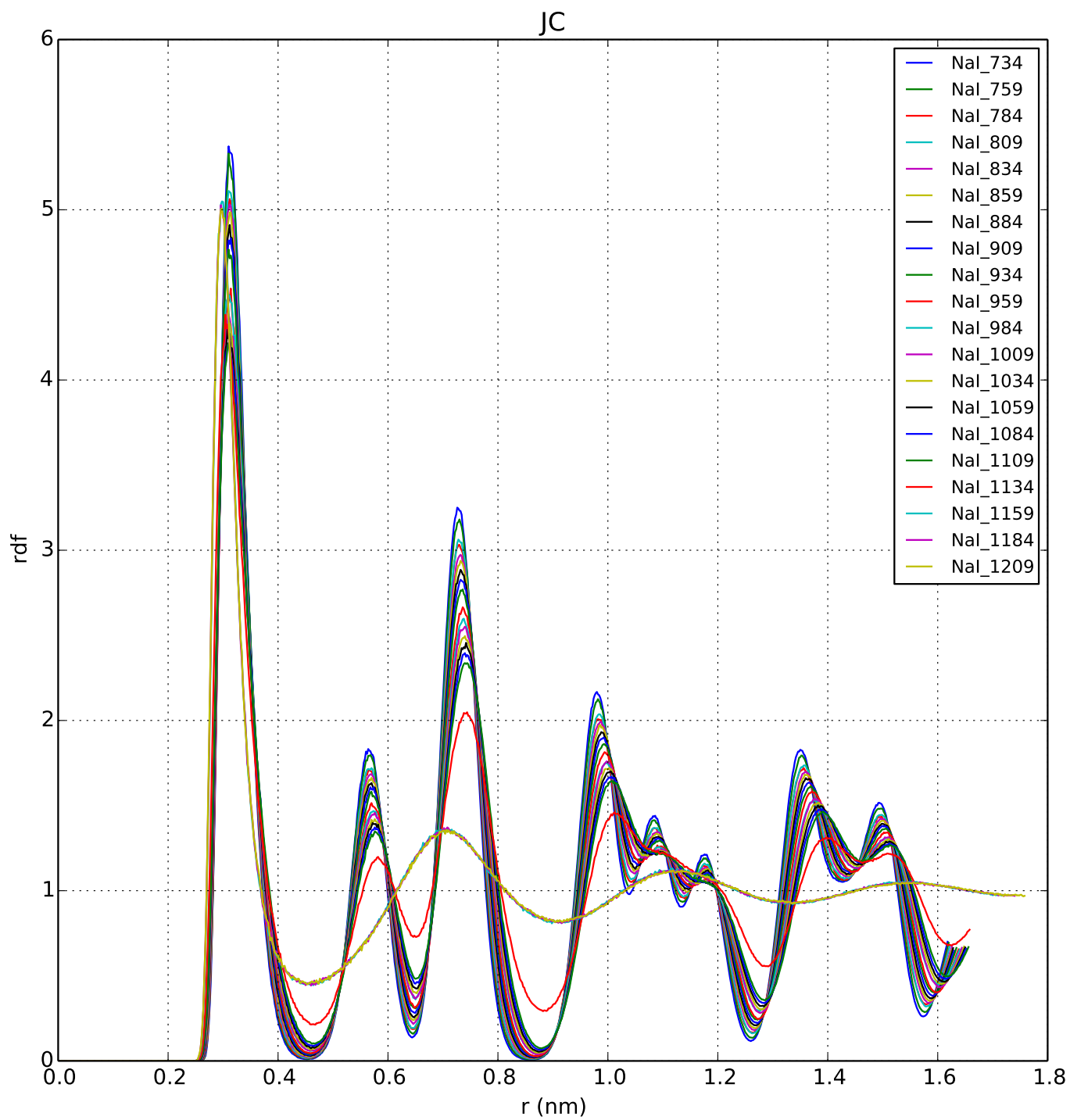


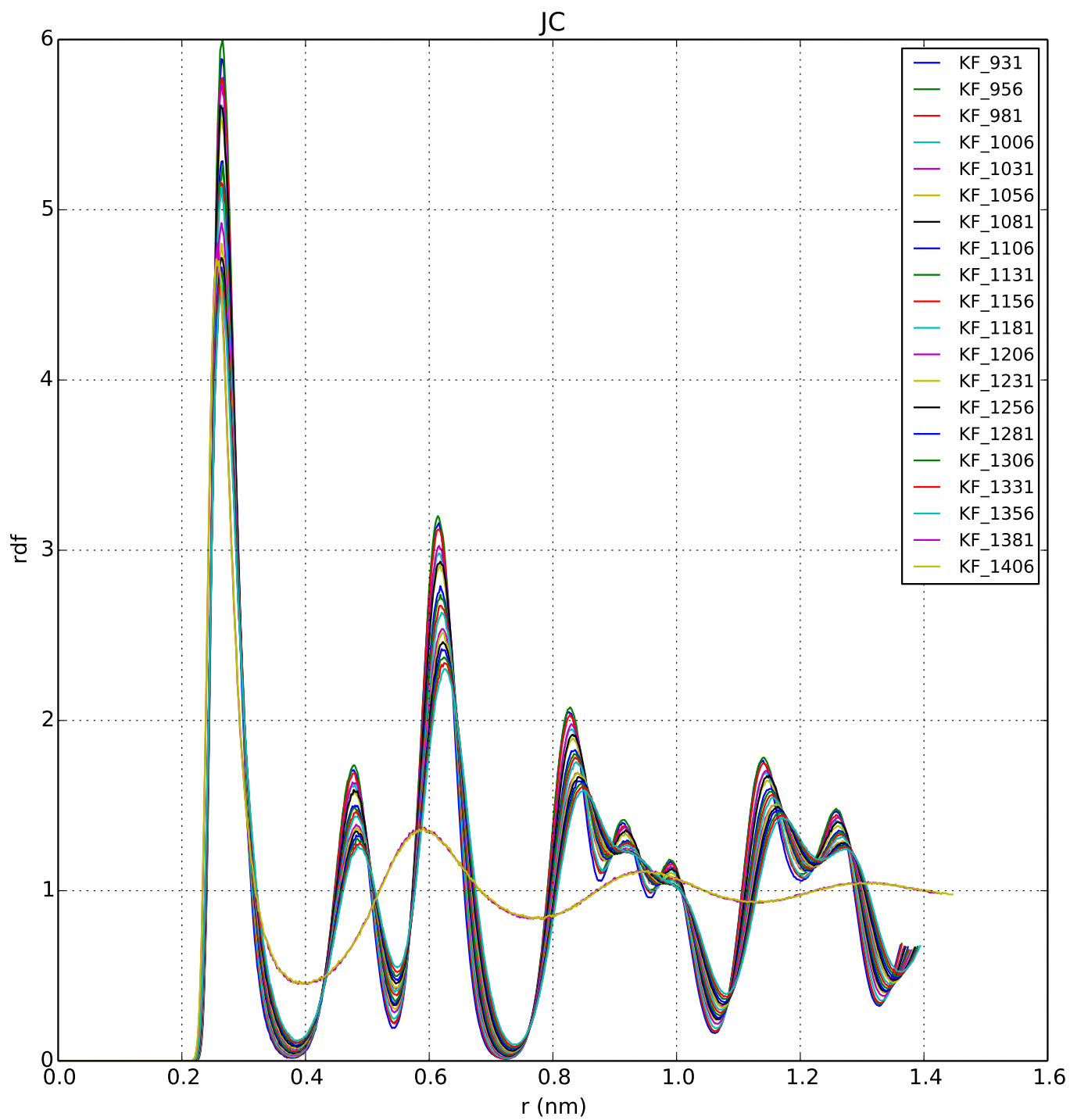


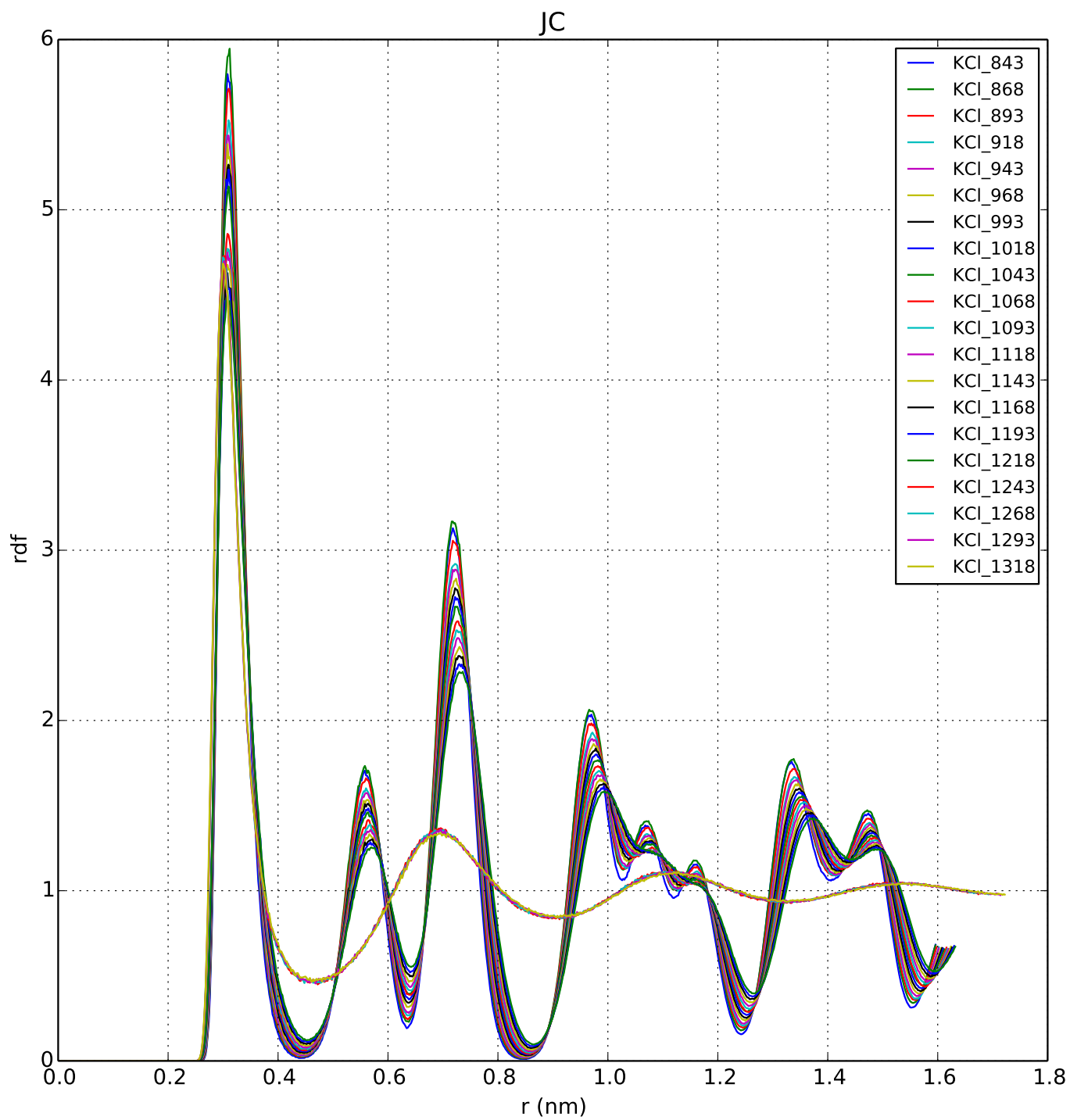


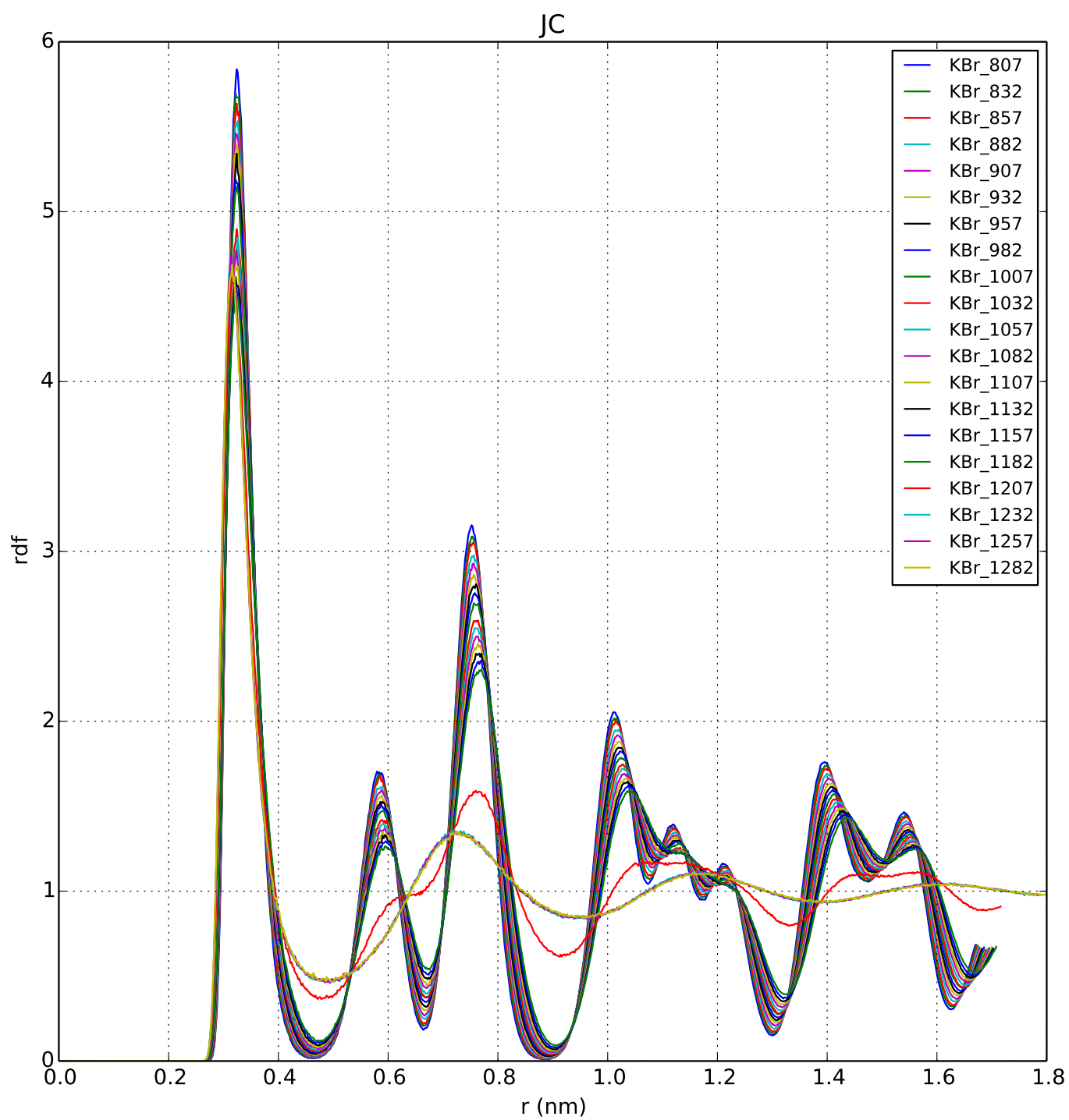


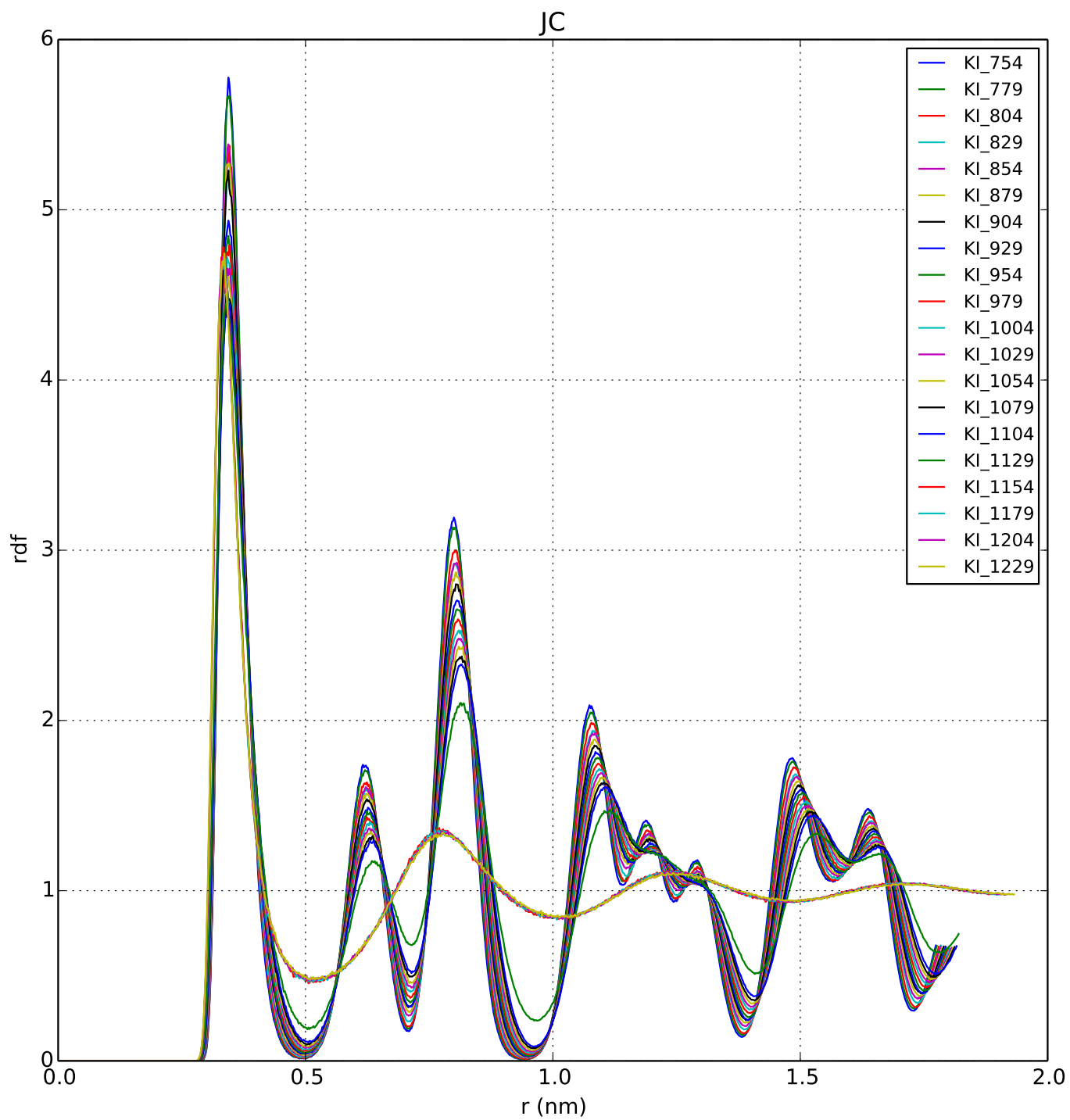


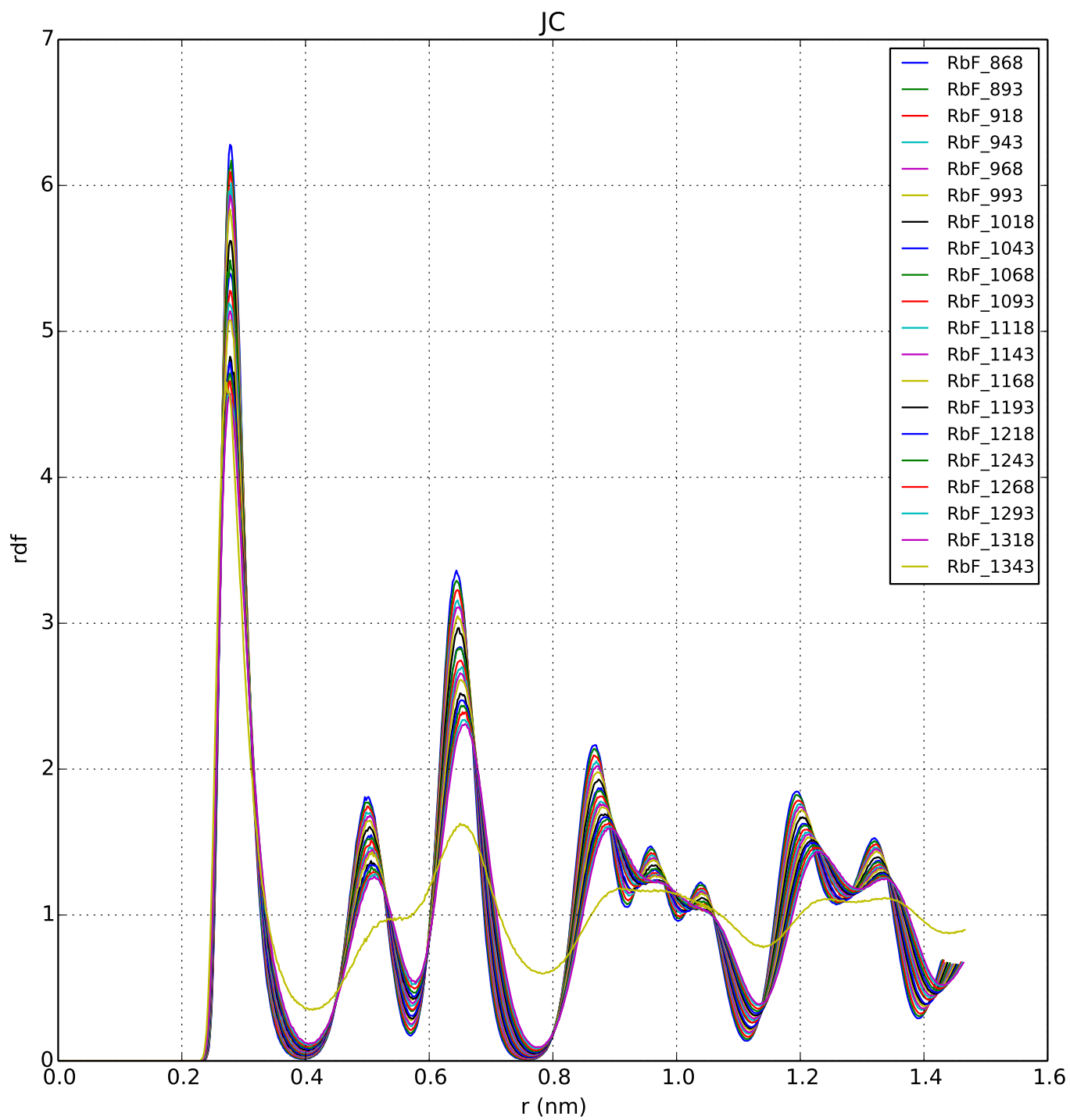


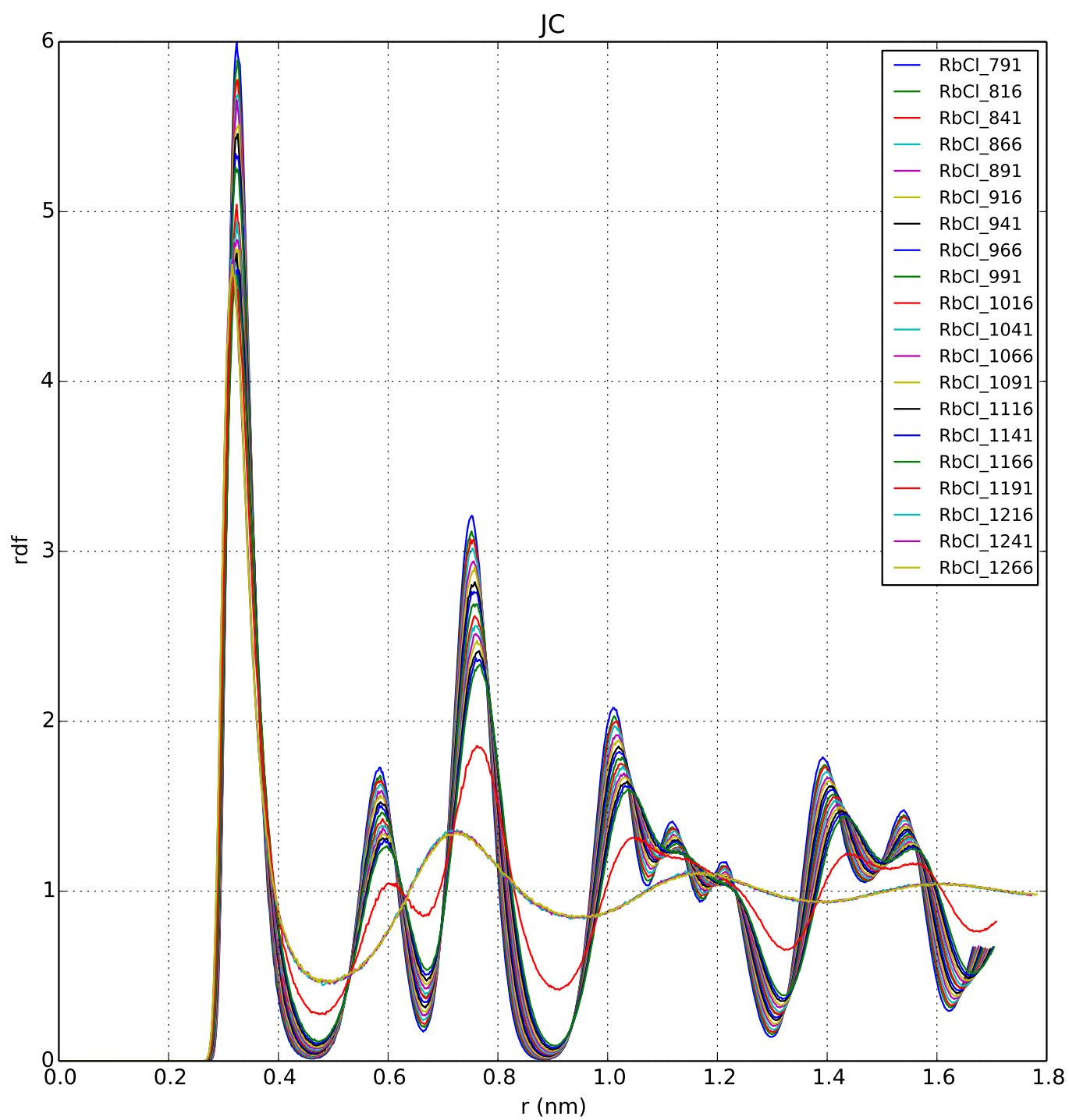


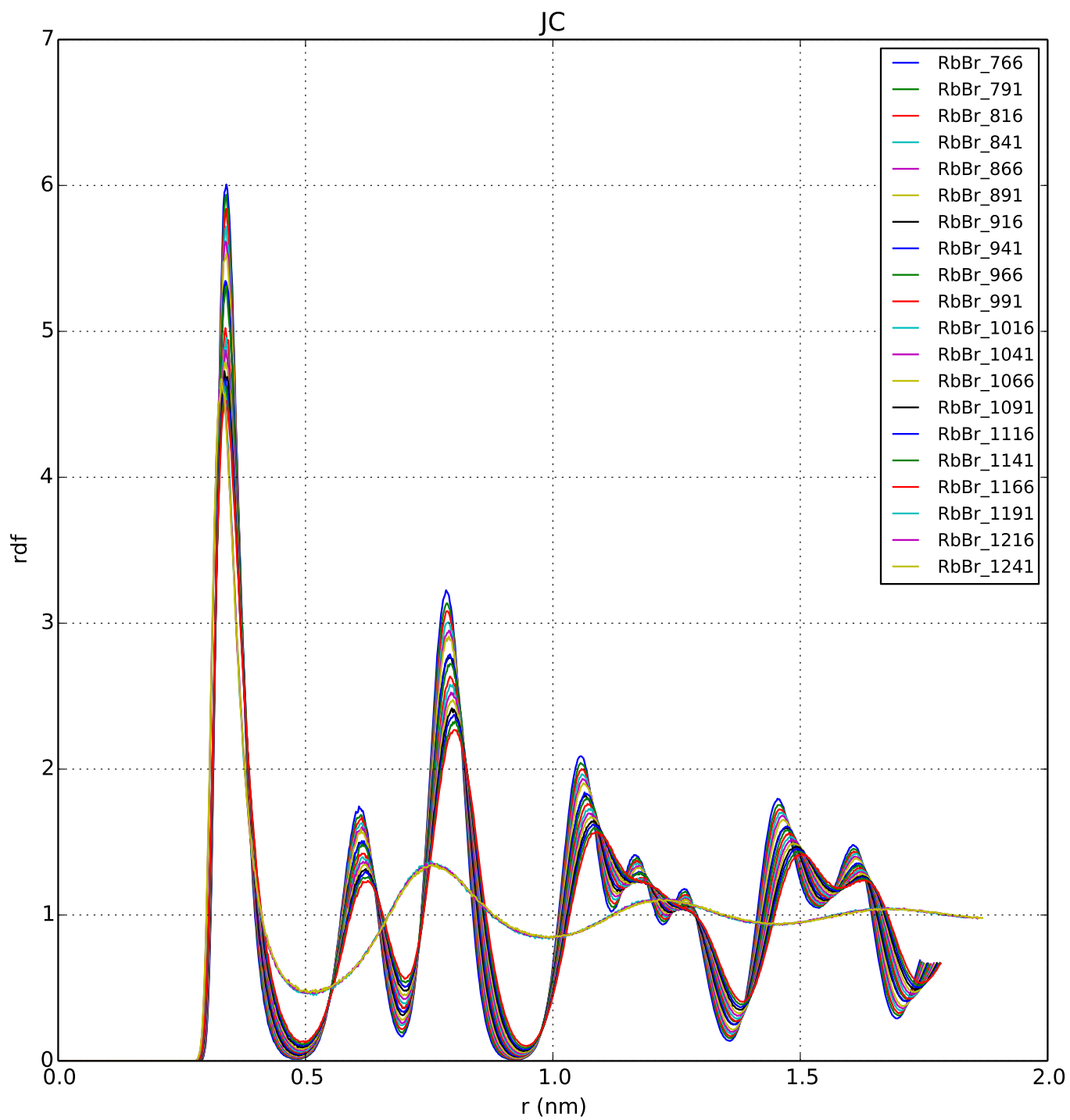


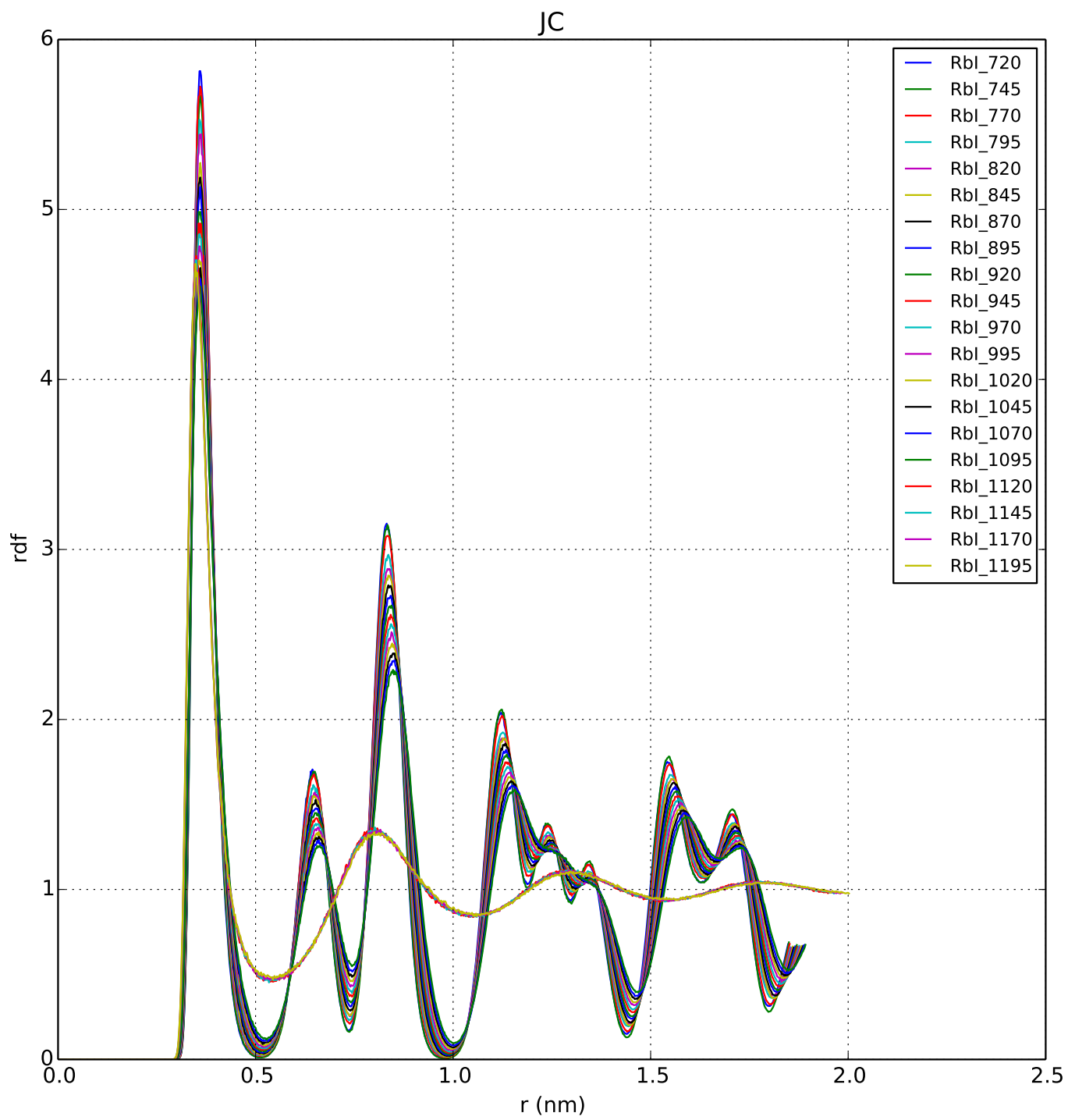


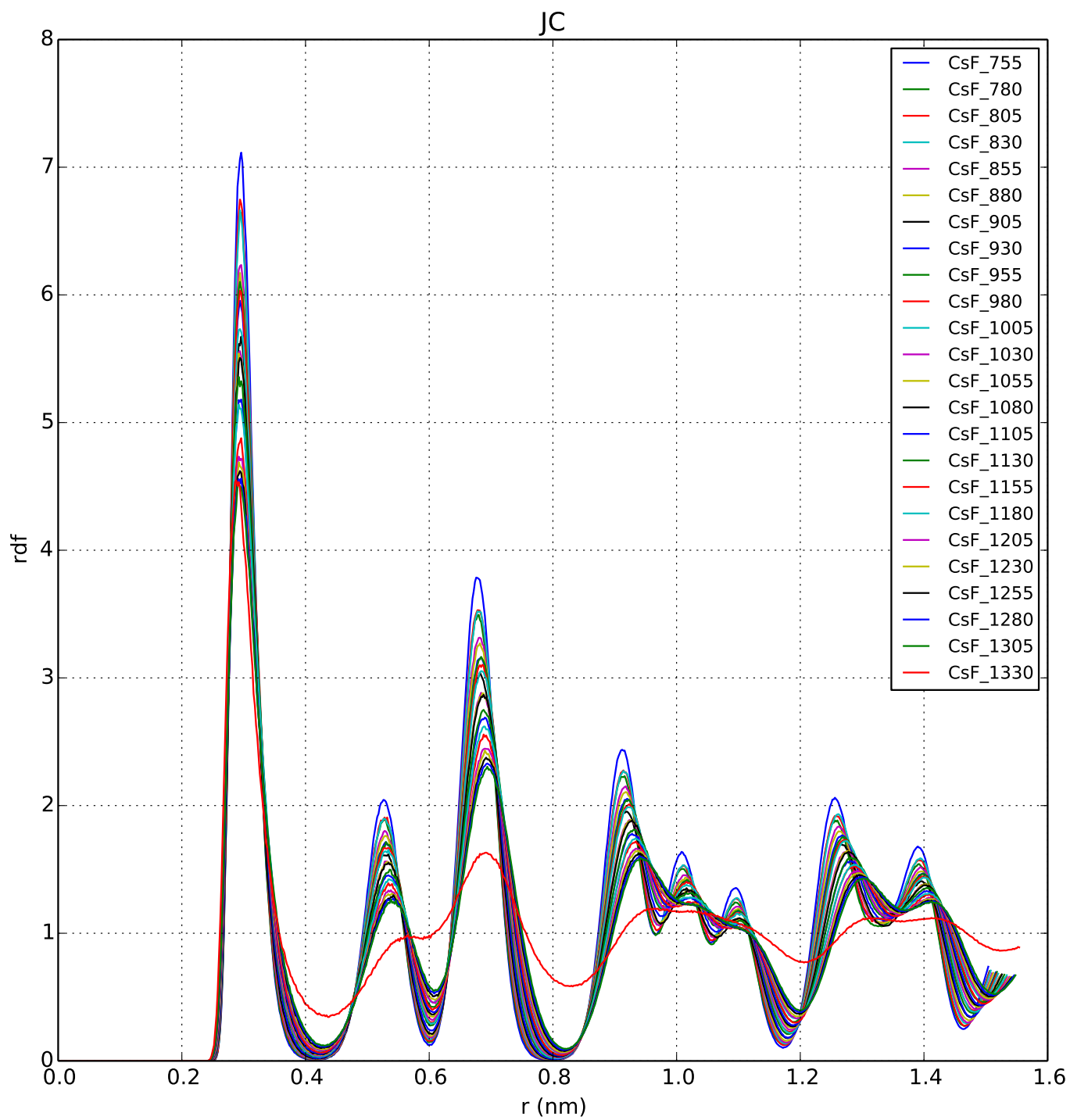


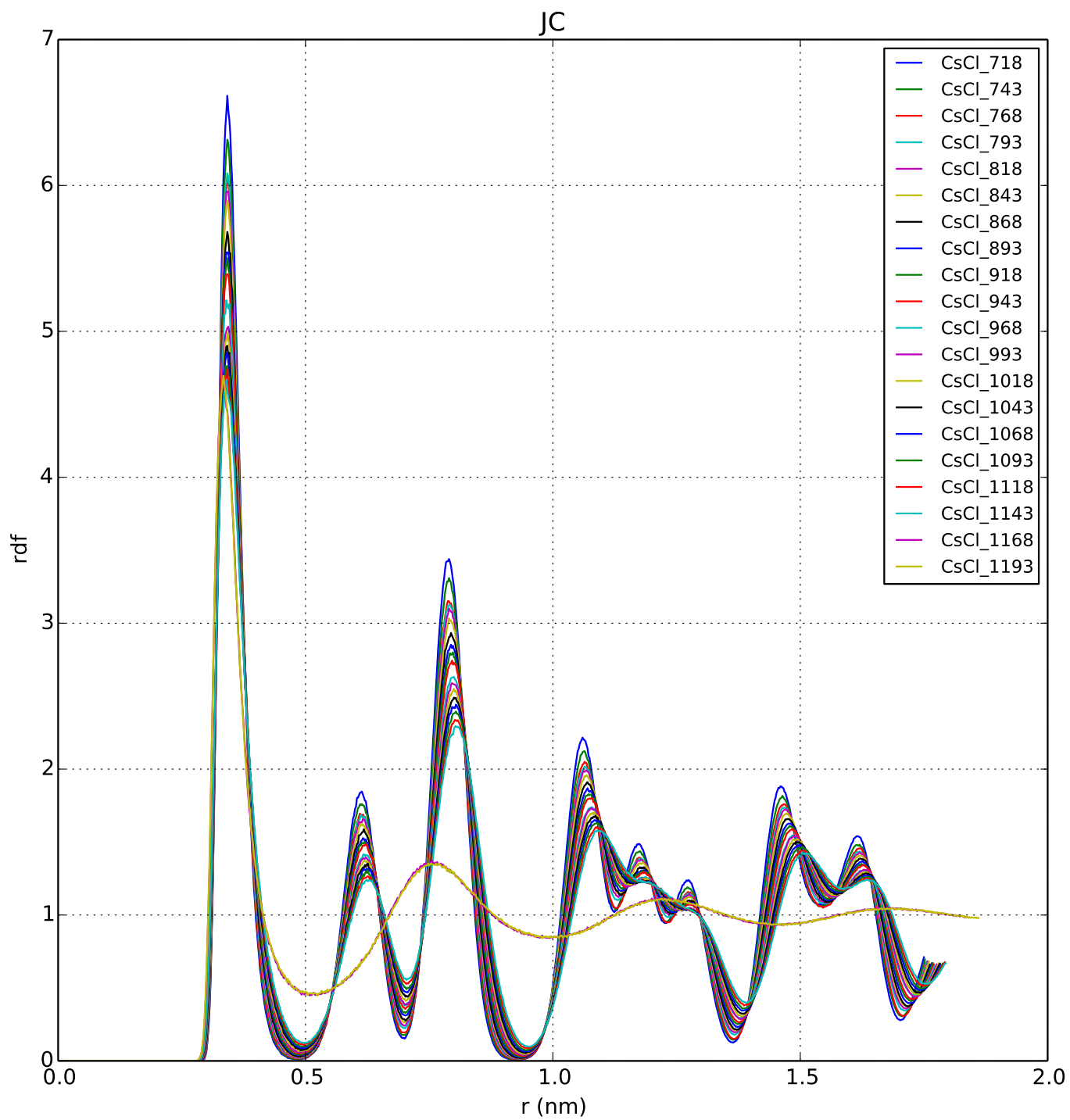












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