

# STUDIES ON THE AUTOXIDATION OF SOME IRON II COMPOUNDS

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**SALAH B.G. ELMARAGHY  
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STUDIES ON THE AUTOXIDATION OF SOME IRON(II) COMPOUNDS

Thesis Advisers

Dr. N. E. Milad

Dr. A.M. Zahra

Approved

*N. E. Milad*

*A. M. Zahra*

*A. K. ...*

Head of Chemistry Department



### N O T E

The candidate has attended postgraduate courses for two years in Inorganic and Physical Chemistry covering the following topics :-

- (1) Chemistry of the Solid State.
- (2) Techniques of Inorganic Chemistry.
- (3) Structural Inorganic Chemistry.
- (4) Electrochemistry.
- (5) Polarography.
- (6) Surface Chemistry.

He has successfully passed a written examination in these courses.

Head of Chemistry Department

### VITA

Salah Bushra G. El-Maraghy was born on January 6, 1935 in Tahta, Suhag, Egypt. He attended Cairo Secondary School. After graduating in 1953, he was enrolled in Teachers' College, Cairo, Egypt. He received the degree, Bachelor of Science and Education in 1958. He was appointed to a teaching assistantship position at Teachers' College of Cairo in 1959.

In 1964, he was enrolled in the Faculty of Science, Cairo University, where he majored in Applied Chemistry and received the degree of Bachelor of Science (Hons.) in 1966.

In 1967 he majored in Inorganic Chemistry under the supervision of Dr. N.E. Milad, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Ain Shams University and Dr. Ahmed M. Zahra, Chemistry Department, College of Education, Ain Shams University.

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### SUMMARY

The effect of hydroxyl ion and citrate ion concentrations on the rate of autoxidation of Fe II has been investigated in the present study. Different mixtures of constant final volume, different initial hydroxyl ion concentrations and variable citrate ion concentrations at fixed temperatures were prepared. The rate of autoxidation was followed by analysing aliquots of the reaction mixture for Fe II. This was done by titration against standard potassium dichromate using diphenyl benzidine as indicator.

The hydroxyl ion was found to enhance the autoxidation process. This was reflected on the increase in the initial rate of reaction and on the increase in the specific rate constant of the reaction. The citrate ion had a similar effect and the temperature was found to increase the specific reaction rates.

The results were explained on the basis of the oxidisability of the different iron II species present in the reaction mixture. These species are  $[\text{Fe}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6]^{++}$ ,  $[\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_n]^{-n+2}$  and  $[\text{Fe}(\text{cit})_n]^{-3n+2}$ .

The oxidation potentials of the aquo and hydroxo complexes are  $-0.77$  and  $+0.56$  volts respectively. The corresponding oxidation potential of the citrato complex has a value which lies between those of the aquo and hydroxo complexes. Thus, both the hydroxo and citrato complexes are oxidisable with dissolved oxygen while the aquo complex is not.

All the plots relating  $\log(a-x)$  versus  $(t)$  obeyed the first order rate law with respect to Fe II giving a straight line relation with a distinct break. This was explained by assuming that in the early stages of the reaction both the hydroxo and citrato complexes are oxidised. As the oxidation process goes on the pH of the reaction mixture drops and the concentration of the hydroxo complex becomes negligibly small. Thus, the part of the curve after the break point represents the oxidation of the citrato complex only. A mechanism for the reaction is suggested.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION ... ..	1
Oxidation and Reduction ... ..	1
Oxidation-Reduction Processes ... ..	3
Quantitative Theories Based on Direct Electron Transfer ... ..	4
The Rates of Electron Exchange Reactions ...	8
The Role of Ligands in Redox Reactions ... ..	11
Autoxidation ... ..	19
OBJECT OF INVESTIGATION ... ..	21
EXPERIMENTAL ... ..	29
Preparation of Stock Solutions ... ..	29
a- Iron II solutions ... ..	29
b- Sodium hydroxide solutions ... ..	29
c- Sodium citrate solutions ... ..	29
d- Potassium dichromate ... ..	30
General Procedure ... ..	30
a- Effect of concentration of free alkali ...	31
b- Effect of citrate ion concentration ...	32
c- Effect of temperature ... ..	32
RESULTS ... ..	33
A- Effect of Free Alkali ... ..	33
B- Effect of Citrate Ion Concentration ... ..	35
C- Effect of Temperature ... ..	36
GENERAL DISCUSSION ... ..	62
REFERENCES ... ..	69

# LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE		Page
I	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 34°	37
II	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 34°	38
III	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 34°	39
IV	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 34°	40
V	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 34°	41
VI	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 34°	42
VII	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 34°	43
VIII	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 34°	44
IX	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 34°	45
X	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 34°	46
XI	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 20°	47
XII	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 20°	48
XIII	Effect of initial free alkali concentration at 20°	49
XIV	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 20°	50
XV	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 20°	51
XVI	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 20°	52
XVII	Effect of citrate ion concentration at 20°	53
XVIII	Specific rate constants, calculated under different conditions	54
XIX	Values for $K_{OH}$ at various hydroxyl and citrate ion concentrations	55
FIGURE		
I	Effect of initial free alkali concentration on the rate of autoxidation of Fe II at 34°	56
II	Effect of initial free alkali concentration on the rate of autoxidation of Fe II at 34°	57
III	Effect of initial free alkali concentration on the rate of autoxidation of Fe II at 20°	58

**FIGURE**

**Page**

- |    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| IV | Effect of initial free alkali concentration on the rate of autoxidation of Fe II at 20° | 59 |
| V  | Effect of citrate on the rate of autoxidation of Fe II at 34°                           | 60 |
| VI | Effect of citrate on the rate of autoxidation of Fe II at 20°                           | 61 |

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

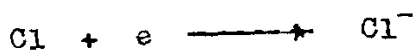
### Oxidation and reduction

The term oxidation is applied to any process which involves the passage of a compound representing a lower stage of combination with oxygen to a substance equivalent to a higher stage of combination with oxygen, by the addition of oxygen or of an electronegative atom or radical, or by the removal of hydrogen or an electropositive atom or radical. Reduction is the converse of oxidation.

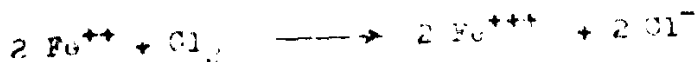
In terms of the ionic theory, oxidation is defined as a process accompanied by loss of electrons. For example the oxidation of ferrous salts to ferric salts can be simply represented as the change of the ferrous to the ferric ion by the loss of an electron, i.e.



Reduction, on the other hand, can be considered as a process accompanied by gain of electrons, e.g. reduction of a chlorine atom to chloride ion:



Thus, in the oxidation of ferrous chloride by chlorine, the over all reaction can be represented as:



In the case of gaseous systems the evidence is clear that direct electron transfer between molecules does occur. In a number of cases the probability of electron transfer, expressed as a collision diameter, is known.

Electron transfer which would go readily in gas phase between two particles will be hindered by the presence of solvent molecules. This is because such molecules prevent the extension into space of the orbitals on the exchanging particles.

In particular the ligands of a complex ion will act as good insulating groups for electrons and orbitals of the central metal ion.

In aqueous solution it is usually possible to imagine atom or group transfer, rather than electron transfer, as occurring in redox reaction. For example iron II ion may act as reducing agent by transferring a hydrogen atom from its hydration shell to a substrate.



Iron III ion may act as oxidising agent by transferring hydroxyl radical to a substrate.

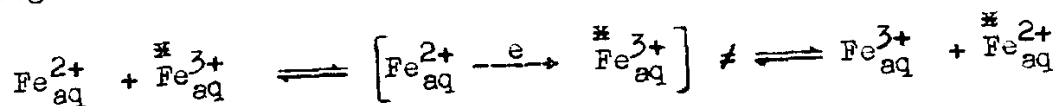


In general transfer of a positive group or atom is equivalent to the transfer of electrons, and transfer of a negative group or atom is equivalent to the taking of electrons.

#### Oxidation-Reduction Processes :

The rates of redox processes are of considerable chemical interest and many detailed kinetic studies have involved complex ions, including the aquo cations of the transitional elements. Especially useful, are rate studies of isotopic exchange reactions between two valency states of an element. Since these reactions can proceed, on a formal basis at least, by the transfer of an electron from the reduced to the oxidized form of an element they are termed "electron exchange reactions".

e.g.



No exchange reactions so far reported have involved oppositely charged ionic reactants.