

QUANTUM-MECHANICAL PREDICTION
OF THERMOCHEMICAL DATA

Understanding Chemical Reactivity

Volume 22

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Quantum-Mechanical Prediction of Thermochemical Data

edited by

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Table of Contents

Preface	xi
Contributors	xiii
Chapter 1. Highly Accurate Ab Initio Computation of Thermochemical Data	
<i>Trygve Helgaker, Wim Klopper, Asger Halkier, Keld L. Bak, Poul Jørgensen and Jeppe Olsen</i>	
1. Introduction	1
2. Hierarchies of Ab Initio Theory	2
2.1. The Coupled-Cluster Hierarchy of n-Electron Models	2
2.2. The Correlation-Consistent Hierarchy of One-Electron Basis Sets	4
2.3. Computational Cost	5
3. Convergence of the Coupled-Cluster Hierarchy	5
3.1. Model Calculations on N ₂ and HF	5
3.2. The CCSD(T) Model	7
4. An Illustrative Example: the Atomization Energy of CO	8
4.1. Electronic and Nuclear Contributions	9
4.2. Dependence on the AO Basis Set	11
5. Short-Range Correlation and the Coulomb Hole	12
5.1. Terms Linear in r ₁₂	12
5.2. Extrapolations from Principal Expansions	15
6. Calibration of the Extrapolation Technique	16
6.1. Valence-Shell Correlation Energy	16
6.2. Total Electronic Energy	19
6.3. Core Contributions to AEs	22
7. Molecular Vibrational Corrections	22
8. Relativistic Contributions	24
9. Calculation of Atomization Energies	25
10. Conclusions and Perspectives	25
References	28

Chapter 2. W1 and W2 Theories, and Their Variants: Thermochemistry in the kJ/mol Accuracy Range

Jan M.L. Martin and S. Parthiban

1. Introduction and Background	31
2. Steps in the W1 and W2 Theories, and Their Justification	33
2.1. Reference Geometry	34
2.2. The SCF Component of TAE	35
2.3. The CCSD Valence Correlation Component of TAE	38
2.4. Connected Triple Excitations: the (T) Valence Correlation Component of TAE	39
2.5. The Inner-Shell Correlation Component of TAE	40
2.6. Scalar Relativistic Correction	41
2.7. Spin-Orbit Coupling	42
2.8. The Zero-Point Vibrational Energy	43
3. Performance of W1 and W2 theories	46
3.1. Atomization Energies (the W2-1 Set)	46
3.2. Electron Affinities (the G2/97 Set)	48
3.3. Ionization Potentials (the G2/97 Set)	48
3.4. Heats of Formation (the G2/97 Set)	50
3.5. Proton Affinities	50
4. Variants and Simplifications	50
4.1. W1' Theory	50
4.2. W1h and W2h Theories	51
4.3. A Bond-Equivalent Model for Inner-Shell Correlation	52
4.4. Reduced-Cost Approaches to the Scalar Relativistic Correction	54
4.5. W1c Theory	56
4.6. Detecting Problems	56
5. Example Applications	57
5.1. Heats of Vaporization of Boron and Silicon	57
5.2. Validating DFT Methods for Transition States: the Walden Inversion	58
5.3. Benzene as a "Stress Test" of the Method	59
6. Conclusions and Prospects	61
References	62

Chapter 3. Quantum-Chemical Methods for Accurate Theoretical Thermochemistry

Krishnan Raghavachari and Larry A. Curtiss

1. Introduction	67
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2. The G3/99 Test Set	69
3. Gaussian-3 Theory	70
4. G3S Theory	77
5. G3X Theory	81
6. Density Functional Theory	88
7. Concluding Remarks	94
References	95

Chapter 4. Complete Basis Set Models for Chemical Reactivity: from the Helium Atom to Enzyme Kinetics

George A. Petersson

1. Introduction	99
2. Pair Natural Orbital Extrapolations	100
3. Current CBS Models	102
4. Transition States	104
5. Explicit Functions of the Interelectron Distance	109
6. The cc-pVnZ Basis Sets	110
7. New Developments	112
7.1. The SCF Limit	113
7.2. The CBS Limit for the MP2 Correlation Energy	114
7.3. The Higher-Order Correlation Energy	117
7.4. Total Energies	118
8. Enzyme Kinetics and Mechanism	120
9. Summary	127
References	127

Chapter 5. Application and Testing of Diagonal, Partial Third-Order Electron Propagator Approximations

*Antonio M. Ferreira, Gustavo Seabra, O. Dolgounitcheva,
V. G. Zakrzewski, and J. V. Ortiz*

1. Introduction	131
2. Electron Propagator Concepts	132
3. An Economical Approximation: P3	134
4. Other Diagonal Approximations	138
5. Nondiagonal Approximations	140
6. An Example of Application of P3: 9-Methylguanine	141
7. P3 Test Results	145
7.1. Atomic Ionization Energies	145
7.2. Molecular Species	151

8. Conclusions and Prospectus	155
References	156

Chapter 6. Theoretical Thermochemistry of Radicals

David J. Henry and Leo Radom

1. Introduction	161
2. Theoretical Procedures	162
3. Geometries	167
4. Heats of Formation	169
5. Bond Dissociation Energies	174
6. Radical Stabilization Energies	177
7. Reaction Barriers	181
8. Reaction Enthalpies	191
9. Concluding Remarks	193
References	194

Chapter 7. Theoretical Prediction of Bond Dissociation Energies for Transition Metal Compounds and Main Group Complexes with Standard Quantum-Chemical Methods

Nikolaus Fröhlich and Gernot Frenking

1. Introduction	199
2. Homoleptic Carbonyl Complexes	203
3. Group-6 Carbonyl Complexes $M(CO)_5L$ ($M = Cr, Mo, W$) ..	206
4. Iron Carbonyl Complexes $Fe(CO)_4L$	207
5. Group-10 Carbonyl Complexes $M(CO)_3L$ ($M = Ni, Pd, Pt$) .	209
6. Group-6 Carbonyl Complexes with Phosphane Ligands $M(CO)_5PR_3$ ($M = Cr, Mo, W$; $R = H, Me, F, Cl$)	210
7. Noble Gas Complexes $M(CO)_5Ng$ ($M = Cr, Mo, W$; $Ng = Ar,$ Kr, Xe)	210
8. Transition Metal Carbene and Carbyne Complexes	211
9. Transition Metal Complexes with π -Bonded Ligands	214
10. Transition Metal Complexes with Group-13 Diyl Ligands ER ($E = B, Al, Ga, In, Tl$)	216
11. Transition Metal Compounds with Boryl Ligands BR_2 and Gallyl Ligands GaR_2	220
12. Transition Metal Methyl and Phenyl Compounds	221
13. Transition Metal Nitrido and Phosphido Complexes	222
14. Main Group Complexes of Group-13 Lewis Acids EX_3 ($E = B - Tl$; $X = H, F, Cl$)	224
15. Main Group Complexes of BeO	226

16. Conclusions	228
References	229

Chapter 8. Theoretical Thermochemistry: a Brief Survey

Walter Thiel

1. Introduction	235
2. Theoretical Background	236
3. Specific Conventions	237
4. Statistical Evaluations	238
5. Discussion	242
References	244
Index	247

Preface

For the first time in the history of chemical sciences, theoretical predictions have achieved the level of reliability that allows them to rival experimental measurements in accuracy on a routine basis. Only a decade ago, such a statement would be valid only with severe qualifications as high-level quantum-chemical calculations were feasible only for molecules composed of a few atoms. Improvements in both hardware performance and the level of sophistication of electronic structure methods have contributed equally to this impressive progress that has taken place only recently.

The contemporary chemist interested in predicting thermochemical properties such as the standard enthalpy of formation has at his disposal a wide selection of theoretical approaches, differing in the range of applicability, computational cost, and the expected accuracy. Ranging from high-level treatments of electron correlation used in conjunction with extrapolative schemes to semiempirical methods, these approaches have well-known advantages and shortcomings that determine their usefulness in studies of particular types of chemical species. The growing number of published computational schemes and their variants, testing sets, and performance statistics often makes it difficult for a scientist not well versed in the language of quantum theory to identify the method most adequate for his research needs.

In this book, the experts who have developed and tested many of the currently used electronic structure procedures present an authoritative overview of the theoretical tools for the computation of thermochemical properties of atoms and molecules. The first two chapters describe the highly accurate, computationally expensive approaches that combine high-level calculations with sophisticated extrapolation schemes. In chapters 3 and 4, the widely used G3 and CBS families of composite methods are discussed. The applications of the electron propagator theory to the estimation of energy changes that accompany electron detachment and attachment processes follow in chapter 5. The next two sections of the book focus on practical applications of the aforescribed

methods to free radicals and organometallic compounds. Finally, a brief review of semiempirical methods is given in chapter 8.

Since the science presented here would never materialize without productive interactions between theory and experiment, it is certainly appropriate to dedicate this book to the practitioners of experimental chemistry who do not hesitate to regard electronic structure calculations as an integral part of their investigations and to the vanguards of molecular quantum mechanics who do not shy away from visiting research laboratories where matter rather than its abstract representations is studied.

Jerzy Cioslowski

Tallahassee, April 2001

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