A Determination of the Formation Constant of SiO(OH)$_3^-$

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Silicate solutions of very low total silicic acid concentration, $B$, have been studied at 25°C in an ionic medium of 0.5 M Na(ClO$_4$) by a coulometric titration technique using a hydrogen electrode. The average number of OH$^-$ bound per Si(OH)$_4$, $Z$, has been varied within the limits 0 $\leq$ $Z$ $\leq$ 0.95 and $B$, between 0.32 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$ M and 1.32 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$ M. In this range data could be explained with the equilibrium Si(OH)$_4$ $\rightleftharpoons$ SiO(OH)$_3^-$ + H$^+$ and with log $^*\beta_1$ = $-9.46 \pm 0.02$ (3ơ). The calculation has been carried out by using the computer program Letagropvrid.$^4$ Table 2 gives a survey of the calculations.

In 1959 Lagerström$^1$ and one of the present authors (N.I.)$^2$ presented data on equilibrium measurements at 25°C of silicate solutions in the ionic media 0.5 m (molality) Na(Cl), 0.5 m Na(ClO$_4$) and 3.0 m Na(ClO$_4$). The hydrogen ion concentration, $h$, was measured with emf methods using a hydrogen electrode. These data, which covered total silicic acid concentrations, $B$ from 0.0025 to 0.080 m and the $Z$-range from $Z$ $\approx$ 0.75 up to $Z$ $\approx$ 1.4 indicated, besides the mononuclear species Si(OH)$_4$, SiO(OH)$_3^-$ and SiO$_2$(OH)$_2^2-$, the presence of polynuclear species with a fairly low number, three or four, of Si-atoms. The equilibrium constants and the formula of the species proposed are given in Table 1. In order to get a "pure" mononuclear $Z$(log $h$)-curve in titrations of silicic acid with OH$^-$, we found it necessary to go down in $B$-concentrations, at least below 2 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$ M. In attempts to titrate these low $B$-concentrations by using the usual buret technique we found that the experimental uncertainty made a data spread, and $Z$ could not be determined accurately enough for getting reliable values of the mononuclear equilibrium constants, $^*\beta_1$ and $^*\beta_2$, so the values given in Table 1 have been obtained by an extrapolation method.

The aim of the present work is to make equilibrium measurements in a series of silicate solutions of very low $B$-values (0.9471 $\times$ 10$^{-8}$, 0.9334 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$, 0.6605 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$, 0.6730 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$, 0.4386 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$, 1.323 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$, 0.3219 $\times$ 10$^{-3}$ M)

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* Referred to on the 9th International Conference on Coordination Chemistry, St. MoritzBad, Switzerland, September 5–9, 1966.
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Table 1. Previously reported equilibrium constants for silicate equilibria (mainly mononuclear).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>0.5 m Na(Cl) (Ref. 2)</th>
<th>0.5 m Na(ClO₄) (Ref. 1)</th>
<th>3.0 m Na(ClO₄) (Ref. 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Si(OH)₄ ⇌ SiO(OH)₃⁻ + H⁺</td>
<td></td>
<td>log *β₁ = - 9.51 ± 0.05</td>
<td>- 9.46</td>
<td>- 9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si(OH)₄ ⇌ SiO₄(OH)₂⁺ + 2H⁺</td>
<td></td>
<td>log *β₂₁ = -22.12 ± 0.15</td>
<td>- 22.02</td>
<td>- 22.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4Si(OH)₄ ⇌ Si₄O₄(OH)₄⁺ + 2H⁺ + 4H₂O</td>
<td></td>
<td>log *β₄₄ = -12.37 ± 0.20</td>
<td>- 12.57</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4Si(OH)₄ ⇌ Si₄O₄(OH)₄⁺ + 4H⁺ + 4H₂O</td>
<td></td>
<td>log *β₄₄ = -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- 32.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2Si(OH)₄ ⇌ Si₂O₃(OH)₃⁺ + 2H⁺ + H₂O</td>
<td></td>
<td>log *β₂₂ = -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- 18.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*β₁ and log *β₂₁, *β₄₄ given in Stability Constants (emf data): Hägg, -9 and -13; Harman, -9.4 to -9.8 and -16.3; Joseph and Oakley, -10 and -12; Treadwell and Wieland, -9.7 and -12; Flint and Wells, -9.66 and -11.7; Oka, Kawagaki and Kadoya, -9.51 and -11.7; Miedreich (own data and recalculation from data of Boque, Hägg and Harman), -9.4 and -11.4; Greenberg (recalculation from data of Bacon and Wills), -9.85 and -11.8; Greenberg (recalculation from data of Harman), -9.7 and -11.9.

*Proposed value in the present work: log *β₁ = -9.46 ± 0.02 (0.5 m Na(Cl)).
by using coulometric and emf methods and from these data try to deduce a reliable value of the equilibrium constant for the equilibrium \( \text{Si(OH)}_4 \leftrightarrows \text{SiO(OH)}_3^- + \text{H}^+ \). It is very difficult to get an accurate analytical value of the total silicic acid concentration, \( B \), and therefore in the calculation of the equilibrium constant, \( \beta_1 \), it was necessary to consider \( B \) as an additional unknown constant to be determined (besides \( \beta_1 \)). Also in this calculation an estimation of the impurity concentration [HX] was necessary. The calculations have been carried out by using the least squares-program Letagropvrid.\(^4\)

For literature data about silicate equilibria in solution the reader is referred to summaries given in our previous papers in these series\(^1\text{--}^3\) and also recently by Thilo\(^5\) and Aveston.\(^6\)

**REAGENTS AND ANALYSES**

Sodium perchlorate, silicic acid solutions were prepared and analysed as described in Lagerström's paper.\(^1\) The analytical determination of the silicic acid concentration in our stock solutions has not been carried out to the same extent and accuracy as described in Refs. 1 and 2, in most cases only an estimation has been made. However, in our computer calculation we have considered \( B \) as an additional unknown constant to be determined (besides the equilibrium constant), and this calculation has shown that the \( B \)-values, obtained in different titrations and with solutions prepared from the same \( B \)-stock, all gave (after recalculation) the same \( B \)-value for the stock.

The hydrogen electrodes were used as described in Ref. 1. The Ag, AgCl-electrodes were prepared according to Brown\(^7\) by electrodeposition Ag on a Pt-foil and afterwards chloridizing the silver as anode in dilute HCl.

In order to prevent dissolution of \( \text{SiO}_4 \) and \( \text{B}_2\text{O}_3 \) from the titration vessels, all surfaces in contact with equilibrium solutions were treated with paraffin wax (p.a.).

**EXPERIMENTAL METHOD**

The hydrogen ion concentration has been measured electrometrically in a number of silicic acid solutions. As usual the measurements were carried out as a series of potentiometric titrations. In each of these the total silicic acid concentration, \( B \), was kept constant; the hydrogen ion concentration, \( h \), was decreased by adding \( \text{OH}^- \) with a coulometer. The coulometer arrangement was the following one:

\[
\text{Pt-gauze} \parallel \text{equilibrium solution} = S \parallel 0.500 \text{ M NaCl} \parallel \text{Ag}^+ \]

with the anode reaction: Ag(s) + Cl\(^-\) → AgCl(s) + e\(^-\), and the cathode reaction: H\(^+\) + e\(^-\) → \( \frac{1}{2} \text{H}_2\text{(g)} \). The current was measured with a Leeds and Northrup Coulometric Analyzer, Catalogue No. 7960.

In order to keep the activity factors constant all solutions were made 0.5 M in respect to sodium ions by addition of NaClO\(_4\). For the determination of the hydrogen ion concentration the following cell was used:

\[
-\text{H}_2\text{(1 atm)} | S | RC + \]

\( S \) is here an equilibrium solution of the general composition:

\[
S:[\text{Si}]_{\text{tot}} = B \text{ M}; [\text{H}^+]_{\text{tot}} = H \text{ M}; [\text{Na}^+]_{\text{tot}} = 0.500 \text{ M}; [\text{Cl}^-]_{\text{tot}} = 0.500 \text{ M}
\]

where $M$ denotes mole/liter, $B$ the total concentration of Si and $H$ the “analytical” hydrogen-ion excess concentration over Si(OH)$_4$ (a negative value of $H$ means OH$^-$-excess over Si(OH)$_4$). Along with these main components, the equilibrium solutions certainly contain an unknown amount of impurities which also consume OH$^-$ giving an “impurity background” in the solutions. The total concentration of these impurities will in the following be denoted with $HX$.

As reference half cell (RC)

$$0.500 \text{ M } \text{NaClO}_4 | 0.500 \text{ M } \text{Na}^+, 0.480 \text{ M } \text{ClO}_4^-, 0.020 \text{ M } \text{Cl}^- | \text{AgCl}, \text{Ag}$$

was used, and the salt bridge was of “Wilhelm” type.$^8$

The emf of the cell (B) at $25^\circ$C can be written:

$$E = E_0 + 59.15 \log h + j_{\text{alk}} K_w h^{-1} + j_{\text{ac}} h$$

(1)

where $E_0$ is a constant, $K_w$ the ionic product of water in 0.500 M Na(ClO$_4$), and $j_{\text{alk}}$ and $j_{\text{ac}}$ constants in the expression for the liquid junction potential. It has been found$^2$ that $j_{\text{ac}} \simeq 83 \text{ mV mole}^{-1}$ and $j_{\text{alk}} \simeq 41 \text{ mV mole}^{-1}$ (valid in 0.5 M Na(Cl)).

From $H$, the analytical excess concentration of protons over Si(OH)$_4$, and the electrometrically measured $h$, the quantity:

$$BZ = h - H - K_w h^{-1}$$

(2)

may be calculated as a function of log $h$. In (2) $Z$ is the average number of OH$^-$ bound per Si(OH)$_4$.

The use of these extremely low total silicic acid concentrations requires that the titration must be carried out in a way that prevents introduction of additional OH$^-$-consuming impurities. For that reason the starting solutions in all of our titrations were prepared from distilled (in a distilling-apparatus with a tin cooler) and boiled (in this way free from CO$_3$) water, sodium chloride, and silicic acid sol. This solution was slightly acidic ($\simeq 1 \text{ mM } \text{H}^+$), and the acidity was decreased by adding OH$^-$ with the coulometer arrangement ($\Lambda$).

CALCULATIONS AND RESULTS

The calculation has been carried out by using the least-squares method and the computer-program Letagrovprid$^4$ (type 3 in the latest version). Input experimental data are the pairs $(E, \mu)$, $E$ is the measured emf, and $\mu$ the number of microfaradays added. Together with these data also a set of first estimated or guessed parameters are given. These are:

*The $k$-parameters* (“unknown constants” special for various titrations), $H_0$ (starting hydrogen excess concentration over Si(OH)$_4$), $B$ (= total silicic acid concentration) and $E_0$ (= the constant in eqn. (1)), and

*the $k$-parameters* (“unknown constants” common to all points), here only $\beta_1$ (= formation constant of SiO(OH)$_3^-$).

We have assumed that $E$ is without error and that all errors are on the analytical excess concentration of protons over Si(OH)$_4$.

*Acta Chem. Scand. 21 (1967) No. 9*
FORMATION CONSTANT OF SiO(OH)₄⁻

\[ H = H₀ - 0.001 \mu V^{-1} \]  \hspace{1cm} (3)

where \( V \) is the volume.

For every point, \( h \) was evaluated from (1) and inserted in the equation:

\[ H_{\text{calc}} = h - Kₚₜ h^{-1} - * \beta₁ B (h + * \beta₁)^{-1} \]  \hspace{1cm} (4)

Then the quantity \((H_{\text{calc}} - H)^2\) was calculated on all experimental points giving the error squares sum:

\[ U = \sum (H_{\text{calc}} - H)^2 \]  \hspace{1cm} (5)

As "best" \( k \)- and \( kₚ \)-values we consider those giving the lowest error square sum \((U_{\text{min}})\). Then standard deviations have been determined as outlined in Ref. 10.

In order to estimate the impurity concentration, [HX], the computer calculation for each titration was divided into two parts, one "acid" part where \( H₀(\text{ac}) \) and \( E₀ \) were determined, and one "alkaline" part where \( H₀(\text{alk}) \), \( B \) and \(* \beta₁ \) were determined. We assumed that the difference \( \Delta H₀ = H₀(\text{ac}) - H₀(\text{alk}) = [HX] \). \( pKₚₜ \) was found to be \( \simeq -5.5 \). (A more recent program uses [HX] directly as a parameter). In Table 2 the results of the computer calculations are given.

With the "best" \( k \)-values obtained in the computer calculations, values of \(-\log h\) and \( Z \) have been calculated. These values for the different \( B \) are given in Table 2 and plotted as curves \( Z(\log h) \) in Fig. 1. From this figure it is seen that all points fall very well on the curve calculated for the mononuclear reaction \( \text{Si(OH)}₄ \rightleftharpoons \text{SiO(OH)}₃⁻ + H^+ \) with \(* \beta₁ = -9.46 \). For comparison Lagerström's data have also been given.

Comparing the \(* \beta₁\)-values of the present study with those reported in Refs. 1 and 2 we find a very good agreement. Other \(* \beta₁\)-values reported in the

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Fig. 1. Experimental data \( Z(\log h) \) for equilibria of silicate solutions (25°C and 0.5 M NaClO₄-medium). The full curve has been calculated for a mononuclear reaction with \(* \beta₁ = -9.46 \).

Acta Chem. Scand. 21 (1967) No. 9
Table 2. Result of computer-calculation on silicate data in 0.5 M Na(ClO₄).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titration No.</th>
<th>ks-Constants with standard deviations (σ)</th>
<th></th>
<th>k-Constants with standard dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$(B \pm \sigma)_{10^a}$</td>
<td>$E_θ \pm \sigma$</td>
<td>$(H_θ{(ac)} \pm \sigma)_{10^a}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9471 ± 0.0011</td>
<td>-355.86 ± 0.13</td>
<td>0.1692 ± 0.0005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9334 ± 0.0005</td>
<td>-355.26 ± 0.13</td>
<td>0.1571 ± 0.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6605 ± 0.0009</td>
<td>-355.69 ± 0.13</td>
<td>0.1680 ± 0.0005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6730 ± 0.0036</td>
<td>-355.22 ± 0.18</td>
<td>0.1613 ± 0.0007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4386 ± 0.0028</td>
<td>-354.09 ± 0.14</td>
<td>0.1539 ± 0.0006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3230 ± 0.0027</td>
<td>-355.87 ± 0.10</td>
<td>0.1660 ± 0.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.3219 ± 0.0005</td>
<td>-356.05 ± 0.21</td>
<td>0.1726 ± 0.0009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposed \(\ast \beta_1\)-value = $$(3.483 \pm 0.129(3\sigma))_{10^{-10}}$$; \(\log \ast \beta_1 = -9.46 \pm 0.02$$
literature (see Ref. 9 and Table 1) are in most cases of very low accuracy and usually not better than \( \pm 0.5 \) "pH"-units. However, if we assume this error, the \( \ast \beta_1 \)-value of the present work falls very well within the accuracy range of the most of earlier reported \( \ast \beta_1 \)-values.

Accurately known \( \ast \beta_1 \)- and \( \ast \beta_{21} \)-values are of greatest importance in silicate studies of higher \( B \)-values, where it is, without knowing the mononuclear constants, very difficult to find the composition and the formation constants of the polysilicates present (here the mononuclear reactions must be subtracted). In the future we hope to complete our earlier published silicate data with more data and data over a greater range of concentrations. At present, work is going on in order to obtain mononuclear silicate data at high \( Z \)-

| \( B = 0.0009471 \) M; \( Z \), \(- \log h \) | 0.041, 8.104 | 0.459, 9.394 | 0.872, 10.268 |
| B = 0.0009334 \ M; \( Z \), \(- \log h \) | 0.079, 8.388 | 0.592, 9.639 |
| B = 0.0006605 \ M; \( Z \), \(- \log h \) | 0.064, 8.299 | 0.578, 9.599 |
| B = 0.0006730 \ M; \( Z \), \(- \log h \) | 0.095, 8.450 | 0.652, 9.710 |
| B = 0.0004386 \ M; \( Z \), \(- \log h \) | 0.249, 9.954 | 0.777, 9.948 |
| B = 0.0013230 \ M; \( Z \), \(- \log h \) | 0.046, 8.167 | 0.412, 9.324 |
| B = 0.0003219 \ M; \( Z \), \(- \log h \) | 0.050, 8.160 | 0.392, 9.246 | 0.842, 10.106 |

*Acta Chem. Scand. 21 (1967) No. 9*
values ($Z > 0.75$) and also to get a better experimental check of $B$ and the impurity concentration, $HX$. These studies are carried out in 0.5 M Na(Cl) and 3.0 M Na(Cl)-medium.

Acknowledgements. The authors are greatly indebted to Professor Lars Gunnar Sillén for his continual interest and for his valuable criticism of the present work.

This work has been supported in part by Statens Naturvetenskapliga Forskningsråd (Swedish Natural Science Research Council), in part also by the Office of Scientific Research of the Office of Aerospace Research, United States' Air Force, through its European Office on contract number AF(052)–162 and grant No. AF EOAR 63–8. Free time at the Bessk and Facit EDB computers has been made available by the Swedish Board of Computing Machinery.

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Received June 19, 1967.