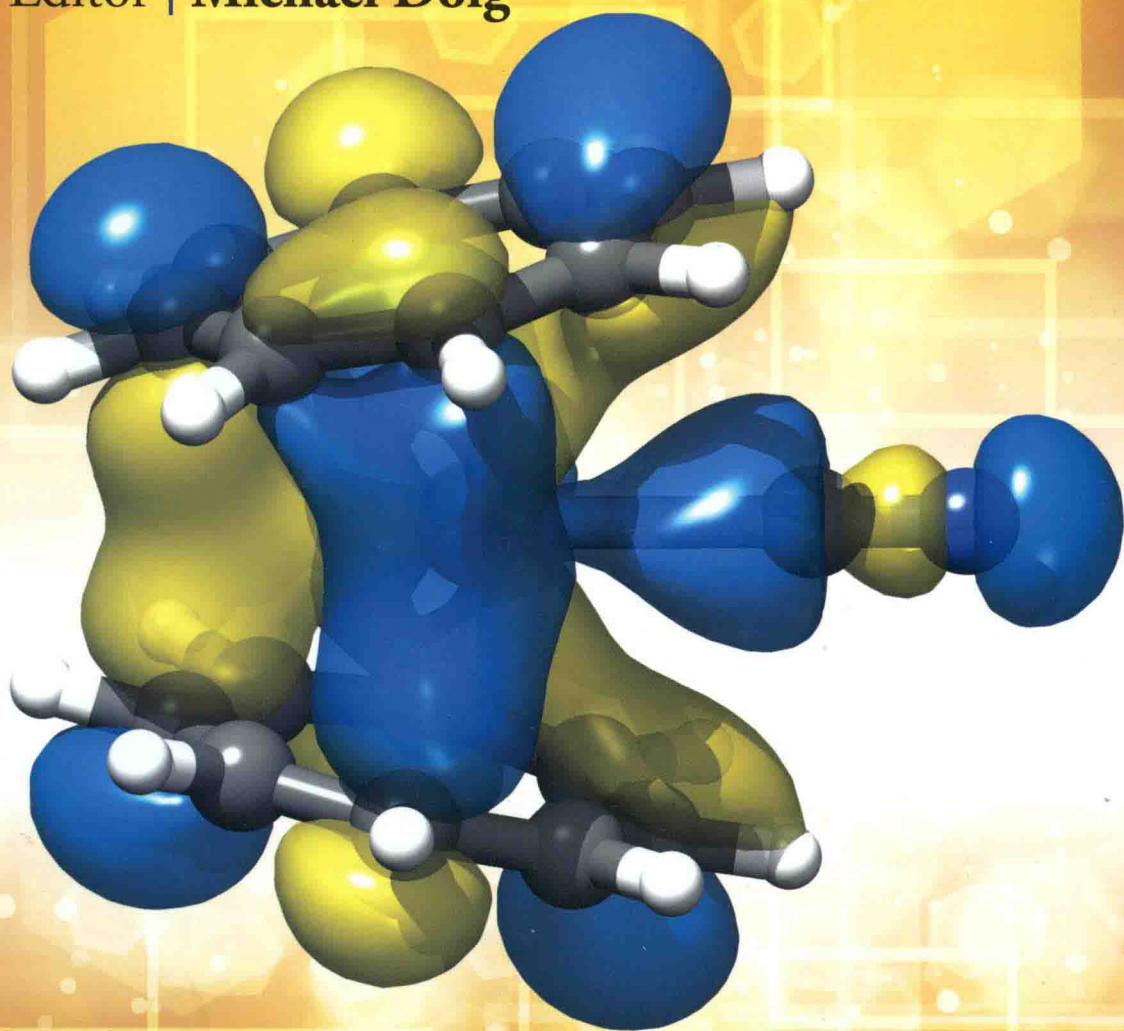


Computational Methods in LANTHANIDE AND ACTINIDE CHEMISTRY

Editor | **Michael Dolg**



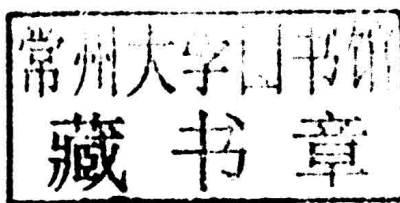
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Computational Methods in Lanthanide and Actinide Chemistry

Edited by

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Preface

Lanthanides and actinides comprise about one-quarter of the known chemical elements collected in the periodic table. Because of their complex electronic structure, the significant electron correlation effects, and the large relativistic contributions, the f-block elements are probably the most challenging group of elements for electronic structure theory. In 1987 Pyykkö reviewed the available relativistic electronic structure calculations for f-element molecules (*Inorganica Chimica Acta* 139, 243–245, 1987). Of the 59 listed studies, 53 dealt with actinides and only 10 with lanthanides. The applied computational methods comprised *ab initio* Dirac-Hartree-Fock one-center expansion and Dirac-Hartree-Fock-Slater calculations, quasirelativistic all-electron X_α -studies, and semiempirical valence-only approaches like relativistic extended Hückel theory. None of these studies took into account static electron correlation explicitly using a multi-configurational wavefunction or included at an *ab initio* level the effects of dynamic electron correlation. No applications of modern density functional theory to f-element molecules were reported either. The treatment of relativity included the Dirac one-particle relativity in a few cases explicitly, but mostly in some approximate form, whereas corrections due to the Breit two-particle interaction or arising from quantum electrodynamics were entirely neglected. Relativistic effective core potentials were only available for a few actinides, which certainly also hampered a routine exploration of lanthanide and actinide chemistry with quantum chemical approaches.

Tremendous progress was made in dealing with lanthanide and actinide systems since the 1987 review of Pyykkö appeared, and the field continues to develop quickly. The current book aims to provide the reader an overview of those state-of-the-art electronic structure theory approaches that have been successfully used for f-element systems so far and summarizes examples of their application. The 16 chapters were written by leading experts involved in the development of these methods as well as their application to various aspects of f-element chemistry. From the results of several studies discussed in these contributions it becomes apparent that quantum chemists successfully conquered the field of lanthanide and actinide chemistry and can provide very valuable contributions not merely supplementing experimental studies, but also frequently guiding their setup and explaining their outcome. Moreover, with largely improved theoretical methods and computational resources at hand, it also became possible to obtain new insights with respect to the interpretation of the electronic structure of f-element compounds.

Despite these many encouraging developments, it is appropriate to say that when it comes to lanthanides and actinides modern electronic structure theory currently can accomplish many things, but certainly not all. It is also clear that this book can only provide a snapshot of the current state of affairs. A number of promising computational approaches, e.g., local electron correlation schemes or F12-dependent wavefunctions, are currently developed and already successfully applied to non-f-element systems. They will during the next years most

likely significantly extend the array of available methods for quantum chemical studies of lanthanides and actinides. Thus more exciting developments can be anticipated.

Finally I would like to thank all authors of the chapters for their excellent contributions. My thanks also go to the staff at Wiley, i.e., Sarah Higginbotham, Sarah Keegan, and Rebecca Ralf, for their guidance and support during this book project. Last but not least, I'm grateful to Mrs. Peggy Hazelwood for copy-editing and to Mr. Yassar Arafat at SPi for final handling of the proofs.

Michael Dolg
Cologne
May 2014

Contents

Contributors

xiii

Preface

xvii

1	Relativistic Configuration Interaction Calculations for Lanthanide and Actinide Anions	1
	<i>Donald R. Beck, Steven M. O'Malley and Lin Pan</i>	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Bound Rare Earth Anion States	2
1.3	Lanthanide and Actinide Anion Survey	3
1.3.1	Prior Results and Motivation for the Survey	3
1.3.2	Techniques for Basis Set Construction and Analysis	6
1.3.3	Discussion of Results	9
1.4	Resonance and Photodetachment Cross Section of Anions	12
1.4.1	The Configuration Interaction in the Continuum Formalism	13
1.4.2	Calculation of the Final State Wavefunctions	15
2	Study of Actinides by Relativistic Coupled Cluster Methods	23
	<i>Ephraim Eliav and Uzi Kaldor</i>	
2.1	Introduction	23
2.2	Methodology	25
2.2.1	The Relativistic Hamiltonian	25
2.2.2	Fock-Space Coupled Cluster Approach	25
2.2.3	The Intermediate Hamiltonian CC method	27
2.3	Applications to Actinides	30
2.3.1	Actinium and Its Homologues: Interplay of Relativity and Correlation	31
2.3.2	Thorium and Eka-thorium: Different Level Structure	35
2.3.3	Rn-like actinide ions	39
2.3.4	Electronic Spectrum of Superheavy Elements Nobelium (Z=102) and Lawrencium (Z=103)	42
2.3.5	The Levels of U^{4+} and U^{5+} : Dynamic Correlation and Breit Interaction	45
2.3.6	Relativistic Coupled Cluster Approach to Actinide Molecules	48
2.4	Summary and Conclusion	49

3	Relativistic All-Electron Approaches to the Study of f Element Chemistry	55
	<i>Trond Saue and Lucas Visscher</i>	
3.1	Introduction	55
3.2	Relativistic Hamiltonians	59
3.2.1	General Aspects	59
3.2.2	Four-Component Hamiltonians	61
3.2.3	Two-Component Hamiltonians	65
3.2.4	Numerical Example	69
3.3	Choice of Basis Sets	71
3.4	Electronic Structure Methods	73
3.4.1	Coupled Cluster Approaches	75
3.4.2	Multi-Reference Perturbation Theory	80
3.4.3	(Time-Dependent) Density Functional Theory	82
3.5	Conclusions and Outlook	83
4	Low-Lying Excited States of Lanthanide Diatomics Studied by Four-Component Relativistic Configuration Interaction Methods	89
	<i>Hiroshi Tatewaki, Shigeyoshi Yamamoto and Hiroko Moriyama</i>	
4.1	Introduction	89
4.2	Method of Calculation	90
4.2.1	Quaternion Symmetry	90
4.2.2	Basis Set and HFR/DC Method	91
4.2.3	GOSCI and RASCI Methods	91
4.3	Ground State	92
4.3.1	CeO Ground State	92
4.3.2	CeF Ground State	97
4.3.3	Discussion of Bonding in CeO and CeF	101
4.3.4	GdF Ground State	102
4.3.5	Summary of the Chemical Bonds, of CeO, CeF, GdF	104
4.4	Excited States	106
4.4.1	CeO Excited States	106
4.4.2	CeF Excited States	108
4.4.3	GdF Excited States	108
4.5	Conclusion	116
5	The Complete-Active-Space Self-Consistent-Field Approach and Its Application to Molecular Complexes of the f-Elements	121
	<i>Andrew Kerridge</i>	
5.1	Introduction	121
5.1.1	Treatment of Relativistic Effects	123
5.1.2	Basis Sets	123
5.2	Identifying and Incorporating Electron Correlation	124
5.2.1	The Hartree Product Wavefunction	124
5.2.2	Slater Determinants and Fermi Correlation	124
5.2.3	Coulomb Correlation	126

5.3	Configuration Interaction and the Multiconfigurational Wavefunction	127
5.3.1	The Configuration Interaction Approach	127
5.3.2	CI and the Dissociation of H ₂	128
5.3.3	Static Correlation and Crystal Field Splitting	130
5.3.4	Size Inconsistency and Coupled Cluster Theory	131
5.3.5	Computational Expense of CI and the Need for Truncation	132
5.4	CASSCF and Related Approaches	133
5.4.1	The Natural Orbitals	133
5.4.2	Optimisation of the CASSCF Wavefunction	133
5.4.3	Variants and Generalisations of CASSCF	137
5.5	Selection of Active Spaces	138
5.5.1	Chemical Intuition and Björn's Rules	138
5.5.2	Natural Orbital Occupations	139
5.5.3	RAS Probing	139
5.6	Dynamical Correlation	139
5.6.1	Multireference Configuration Interaction	140
5.6.2	Multireference Second Order Perturbation Theory	140
5.7	Applications	141
5.7.1	Bonding in Actinide Dimers	141
5.7.2	Covalent Interactions in the U-O Bond of Uranyl	142
5.7.3	Covalency and Oxidation State in f-Element Metallocenes	143
5.8	Concluding Remarks	144
6	Relativistic Pseudopotentials and Their Applications	147
	<i>Xiaoyan Cao and Anna Weigand</i>	
6.1	Introduction	147
6.2	Valence-only Model Hamiltonian	149
6.2.1	Pseudopotentials	150
6.2.2	Approximations	151
6.2.3	Choice of the Core	153
6.3	Pseudopotential Adjustment	155
6.3.1	Energy-Consistent Pseudopotentials	155
6.3.2	Shape-Consistent Pseudopotentials	158
6.4	Valence Basis Sets for Pseudopotentials	161
6.5	Selected Applications	162
6.5.1	DFT Calculated M–X (M = Ln, An; X = O, S, I) Bond Lengths	163
6.5.2	Lanthanide(III) and Actinide(III) Hydration	166
6.5.3	Lanthanide(III) and Actinide(III) Separation	170
6.6	Conclusions and Outlook	172
7	Error-Balanced Segmented Contracted Gaussian Basis Sets: A Concept and Its Extension to the Lanthanides	181
	<i>Florian Weigend</i>	
7.1	Introduction	181
7.2	Core and Valence Shells: General and Segmented Contraction Scheme	182

7.3	Polarization Functions and Error Balancing	185
7.4	Considerations for Lanthanides	187
8	Gaussian Basis Sets for Lanthanide and Actinide Elements: Strategies for Their Development and Use	195
	<i>Kirk A. Peterson and Kenneth G. Dyall</i>	
8.1	Introduction	195
8.2	Basis Set Design	196
8.2.1	General Considerations	196
8.2.2	Basis Sets for the f Block	197
8.3	Overview of Existing Basis Sets for Lanthanides and Actinide Elements	204
8.3.1	All-Electron Treatments	204
8.3.2	Effective Core Potential Treatments	205
8.4	Systematically Convergent Basis Sets for the f Block	206
8.4.1	All-Electron	207
8.4.2	Pseudopotential-Based	208
8.5	Basis Set Convergence in Molecular Calculations	210
8.6	Conclusions	213
9	4f, 5d, 6s, and Impurity-Trapped Exciton States of Lanthanides in Solids	217
	<i>Zoila Barandiarán and Luis Seijo</i>	
9.1	Introduction	217
9.2	Methods	220
9.2.1	Embedded-Cluster Methods	221
9.2.2	Combined Use of Periodic Boundary Condition Methods and Embedded Cluster Methods	227
9.2.3	Absorption and Emission Spectra	227
9.3	Applications	228
9.3.1	Bond Lengths	228
9.3.2	Energy Gaps	231
9.3.3	Impurity-Trapped Excitons	232
9.3.4	Solid-State-Lighting Phosphors	234
10	Judd-Ofelt Theory — The <i>Golden</i> (and the Only One) Theoretical Tool of f-Electron Spectroscopy	241
	<i>Lidia Smentek</i>	
10.1	Introduction	241
10.2	Non-relativistic Approach	245
10.2.1	Standard Judd-Ofelt Theory and Its Original Formulation of 1962	248
10.2.2	Challenges of <i>ab initio</i> Calculations	251
10.2.3	Problems with the Interpretation of the <i>f</i> -Spectra	255
10.3	Third-Order Contributions	257
10.3.1	Third-Order Electron Correlation Effective Operators	259
10.4	Relativistic Approach	260
10.5	Parameterizations of the <i>f</i> -Spectra	262

11 Applied Computational Actinide Chemistry	269
<i>André Severo Pereira Gomes, Florent Réal, Bernd Schimmelpfennig, Ulf Wahlgren and Valérie Vallet</i>	
11.1 Introduction	269
11.1.1 Relativistic Correlated Methods for Ground and Excited States	270
11.1.2 Spin-Orbit Effects on Heavy Elements	272
11.2 Valence Spectroscopy and Excited States	273
11.2.1 Accuracy of Electron Correlation Methods for Actinide Excited States: WFT and DFT Methods	273
11.2.2 Valence Spectra of Larger Molecular Systems	275
11.2.3 Effects of the Condensed-Phase Environment	276
11.2.4 Current Challenges for Electronic Structure Calculations of Heavy Elements	278
11.3 Core Spectroscopies	278
11.3.1 X-ray Photoelectron Spectroscopy (XPS)	279
11.3.2 X-ray Absorption Spectroscopies	280
11.4 Complex Formation and Ligand-Exchange Reactions	283
11.5 Calculations of Standard Reduction Potential and Studies of Redox Chemical Processes	286
11.6 General Conclusions	288
12 Computational Tools for Predictive Modeling of Properties in Complex Actinide Systems	299
<i>Jochen Autschbach, Niranjana Govind, Raymond Atta-Fynn, Eric J. Bylaska, John W. Weare and Wibe A. de Jong</i>	
12.1 Introduction	299
12.2 ZORA Hamiltonian and Magnetic Property Calculations	300
12.2.1 ZORA Hamiltonian	300
12.2.2 Magnetic properties	303
12.3 X2C Hamiltonian and Molecular Properties from X2C Calculations	312
12.4 Role of Dynamics on Thermodynamic Properties	319
12.4.1 Sampling Free Energy Space with Metadynamics	319
12.4.2 Hydrolysis constants for U(IV), U(V), and U(VI)	320
12.4.3 Effects of Counter Ions on the Coordination of Cm(III) in Aqueous Solution	322
12.5 Modeling of XAS (EXAFS, XANES) Properties	325
12.5.1 EXAFS of U(IV) and U(V) Species	327
12.5.2 XANES Spectra of Actinide Complexes	330
13 Theoretical Treatment of the Redox Chemistry of Low Valent Lanthanide and Actinide Complexes	343
<i>Christos E. Kefalidis, Ludovic Castro, Ahmed Yahia, Lionel Perrin and Laurent Maron</i>	
13.1 Introduction	343
13.2 Divalent Lanthanides	349

13.2.1	Computing the Nature of the Ground State	349
13.2.2	Single Electron Transfer Energy Determination in Divalent Lanthanide Chemistry	352
13.3	Low-Valent Actinides	356
13.3.1	Actinide(III) Reactivity	356
13.3.2	Other Oxidation State (Uranyl...)	361
13.4	Conclusions	365
14	Computational Studies of Bonding and Reactivity in Actinide Molecular Complexes	375
	<i>Enrique R. Batista, Richard L. Martin and Ping Yang</i>	
14.1	Introduction	375
14.2	Basic Considerations	376
14.2.1	Bond Energies	376
14.2.2	Effect of Scalar Relativistic Corrections	377
14.2.3	Spin-Orbit Corrections	378
14.2.4	Relativistic Effective Core Potentials (RECP)	379
14.2.5	Basis Sets	380
14.2.6	Density Functional Approximations for Use with f-Element Complexes	381
14.2.7	Example of application: Performance in Sample Situation ($UF_6 \rightarrow UF_5 + F$) [39, 40]	382
14.2.8	Molecular Systems with Unpaired Electrons	384
14.3	Nature of Bonding Interactions	385
14.4	Chemistry Application: Reactivity	387
14.4.1	First Example: Study of C–H Bond Activation Reaction	387
14.4.2	Study of Imido-Exchange Reaction Mechanism	395
14.5	Final Remarks	397
15	The 32-Electron Principle: A New Magic Number	401
	<i>Pekka Pyykkö, Carine Clavaguéra and Jean-Pierre Dognon</i>	
15.1	Introduction	401
15.1.1	Mononuclear, ML_n systems	401
15.1.2	Metal Clusters as ‘Superatoms’	402
15.1.3	The Present Review: $An@L_n$ -Type Systems	404
15.2	Cases So Far Studied	404
15.2.1	The Early Years: Pb_{12}^{2-} and Sn_{12}^{2-} Clusters	404
15.2.2	The Validation: $An@C_{28}$ ($An = Th, Pa^+, U^{2+}, Pu^{4+}$) Series	410
15.2.3	The Confirmation: $[U@Si_{20}]^{6-}$ -like Isoelectronic Series	413
15.3	Influence of Relativity	418
15.4	A Survey of the Current Literature on Lanthanide- and Actinide-Centered Clusters	420
15.5	Concluding Remarks	421