

# 86(10): The Coulomb Integral in Helium

Reference: P. W. Atkins, "Molecular Quantum Mechanics"  
(Oxford University Press, 1993, 2nd. ed.)

The Coulomb integral is:

$$J = E^{(1)} = \langle n_1, l_1, m_{l1}; n_2, l_2, m_{l2} \left| \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0 r_{12}} \right| n_1, l_1, m_{l1}; n_2, l_2, m_{l2} \rangle$$
$$= \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int |\psi_1(r_1)|^2 \frac{1}{r_{12}} |\psi_2(r_2)|^2 d\tau_1 d\tau_2 \quad (1)$$

The Coulombic interaction energy between two electrons in a hydrogen-like 1s orbital is evaluated using:

$$\psi(r_1) = \left( \frac{Z^3}{\pi a_0^3} \right)^{1/2} e^{-Zr_1/a_0} \quad (2)$$

$$\psi(r_2) = \left( \frac{Z^3}{\pi a_0^3} \right)^{1/2} e^{-Zr_2/a_0} \quad (3)$$

As described by Atkins 2 page 225,  $r_{12}$  is expanded in terms of  $r_1$  and  $r_2$ . When  $r_1 > r_2$ :

$$\frac{1}{r_{12}} = \frac{1}{r_1} \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \sum_{m_l=1}^l \left( \frac{4\pi}{2l+1} \right) \left( \frac{r_2}{r_1} \right)^l Y_{lm_l}(\theta_1, \phi_1) Y_{lm_l}(\theta_2, \phi_2)$$

(4)

and when  $r_2 > r_1$ , interchange  $r_1$  and  $r_2$ . The angular integrations eliminate all terms in this sum except for one

2) with  $l = m_l = 0$ . The surviving term:

$$Y_{00} = \left(\frac{1}{4\pi}\right)^{1/2} \quad - (5)$$

Thus:  $\frac{1}{r_{12}} = \frac{1}{r_1}$  when  $r_1 > r_2$ , - (6)

$\frac{1}{r_{12}} = \frac{1}{r_2}$  when  $r_2 > r_1$ . - (7)

The radial integration is divided into two parts corresponding to  $r_1 > r_2$  and  $r_2 > r_1$ . Thus:

$$J = \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left(\frac{Z^3}{\pi a_0^3}\right)^2 \int_0^{2\pi} d\phi_1 \int_0^{2\pi} d\phi_2 \int_0^\pi \sin\theta_1 d\theta_1 \int_0^\pi \sin\theta_2 d\theta_2 \int \frac{r_1 r_2}{r_{12}} e^{-2Z(r_1+r_2)/a_0} dr_1 dr_2$$

$$= \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left(\frac{Z^3}{\pi a_0^3}\right)^2 (2\pi)^2 Z^2 \left( \int_0^{r_2} \frac{r_1^2}{r_2} e^{-2Zr_1/a_0} dr_1 + \int_{r_2}^\infty \frac{r_1^2}{r_1} e^{-2Zr_1/a_0} dr_1 \right) dr_2$$

$$J = \frac{5}{8} \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{Z^4}{a_0} \quad - (8)$$

For Helium,  $Z = 2$ , so:

$$J = \frac{5}{4} \frac{e^2}{4\pi a_0} \quad - (9)$$

where  $a_0 = \frac{4\pi\epsilon_0 \hbar^2}{m_e e^2}$  - (10)

is the Bohr radius ( $5.292 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}$ )

Thus:

$$J = 5.45 \times 10^{-18} \text{ J} \quad (11)$$

We have:

$$E_{1s} = -4hcR_{\infty} = -8.72 \times 10^{-18} \text{ J} \quad (12)$$

So the total energy of the atom is:

$$E = 2(-8.72 \times 10^{-18} \text{ J}) + 5.45 \times 10^{-18} \text{ J} = -1.20 \times 10^{-17} \text{ J} \quad (13)$$

This compares to  $-7220 \text{ kJ mole}^{-1}$ . The experimental value is the sum of the first and second ionization energies of helium, and is  $-7619 \text{ kJ mole}^{-1}$ . The perturbation is not small because:

$$J = \frac{5}{16} (2E_{1s}) \quad (14)$$

so first order perturbation theory is not a good approximation.

Radiative Correction to the Coulomb Integral

These are calculated from the second line of eq. (8) using the radiative correction to  $r_1$  and  $r_2$ , as given in note 86(9a).

4) We recall that the radiative corrections are calculated from:

$$-\frac{\ell^2}{2m_e} \frac{d^2 P}{dr_1^2} - V_{\text{eff},1}^{(0)} P = E_1 P \quad (15)$$

$$-\frac{\ell'^2}{2m_e} \frac{d^2 P}{dr_2^2} - V_{\text{eff},2}^{(0)} P = E_2 P \quad (16)$$

where: 
$$V_{\text{eff},1}^{(0)} = -\frac{e^2}{2\pi\epsilon_0 r_1} + \frac{\ell(\ell+1)\ell^2}{m r_1^2} \quad (17)$$

$$V_{\text{eff},2}^{(0)} = -\frac{e^2}{2\pi\epsilon_0 r_2} + \frac{\ell'(\ell'+1)\ell'^2}{m r_2^2} \quad (18)$$

By hypothesis, eqs. (15) and (16) become:

$$-\frac{\ell^2}{2m} \frac{d^2 P}{dr_1^2} - V_{\text{eff},1} P = E_1 P \quad (19)$$

$$-\frac{\ell'^2}{2m} \frac{d^2 P}{dr_2^2} - V_{\text{eff},2} P = E_2 P \quad (20)$$

after radiative corrections:

$$\frac{d^2}{dr_1^2} \rightarrow \left(1 + \frac{\alpha}{4\pi}\right)^2 \frac{d^2}{dr_1^2} \quad (21)$$

$$\frac{d^2}{dr_2^2} \rightarrow \left(1 + \frac{\alpha}{4\pi}\right)^2 \frac{d^2}{dr_2^2} \quad (22)$$

5) where:

$$V_{\text{eff},1} = \frac{e^2}{2\pi\epsilon_0(r_1+r_{\text{vac}})} - \frac{l(l+1)\hbar^2}{(r_1+r_{\text{vac}})^2} \quad (23)$$

$$V_{\text{eff},2} = \frac{e^2}{2\pi\epsilon_0(r_2+r_{\text{vac}})} - \frac{l(l+1)\hbar^2}{(r_2+r_{\text{vac}})^2} \quad (24)$$

To first order in  $d$ :

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{4\pi m_e} \frac{d^2 P}{dr_1^2} = (V_{\text{eff},1}^{(0)} - V_{\text{eff},1}) P \quad (25)$$

$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{4\pi m_e} \frac{d^2 P}{dr_2^2} = (V_{\text{eff},2}^{(0)} - V_{\text{eff},2}) P \quad (26)$$

and for two 1s electrons:

$$J = \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \left( \frac{Z}{\pi a_0} \right)^2 (2\pi)^2 Z \int_0^\infty \frac{e^{-2Zr_2/a_0}}{r_2^2} \left( \int_0^{r_2} \frac{e^{-2Zr_1/a_0}}{r_1} dr_1 + \int_{r_2}^\infty \frac{e^{-2Zr_1/a_0}}{r_1} dr_1 \right) dr_2 \quad (27)$$

So the computer algebra should calculate  $r_1$  and  $r_2$  from eqs. (25) and (26) in terms of  $r_{\text{vac}}$  and express  $J$  as a function of  $r_{\text{vac}}$  in eq. (27). This shows how the vacuum affects 1s electron-electron repulsion.