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New process observed in collisions between highly charged protonated protein and Xe^{8+} , Xe^{5+} , He^{2+} ions

S. Martin *¹, L. Chen *², R. Brédy *, A. Vernier*, P. Dugourd*, R. Antoine*, C. Ortéga*, M. Ji*, J. Bernard*. O. Gonzalez Maganad[†]. G. Reitsma[†] and T. Schlathölter

Institut Lumière Matière, UMR5306 Université Lyon 1-CNRS, Université de Lyon, 69622 Villeurbanne cedex, France [†] KVI Atomic and Molecular Physics, University of Groningen, Zernikelaan 25, NL-9747 AA, The Nederlands

Synopsis Electron multicapture processes have been studied in collisions between cytochrome C protein and highly charged Xe and He projectile at keV kinetic energy range. In competition with single and double electron capture, a new and unexpected channel attributed to deprotonation process of the protein has been observed.

Studies of processes in ions-ions collisions are not common in the keV energy range. We have investigated the interaction between highly charged Xe⁸⁺, Xe⁵⁺ or He²⁺ projectiles and trapped highly protonated cytochrome C (Cyt-C) using a new set-up developed at the KVI laboratory [1]. Single electron capture SEC and double electron capture DEC processes have been studied versus the charge q of the protein Cyt-C^{q+} (q=15-19). Typical mass spectra are shown on figure 1 for collisions between Xe^{8+} and $Cyt-C^{q+}$. At first sight, collisions between selected charge state of Cyt-C and projectile involve very few processes. As an example for the trapped Cyt- C^{18+} parent ion (figure 1d) the expected Cyt- C^{19+} and Cyt- C^{20+} peaks are mainly attributed to the single (SEC) and double electron capture (DEC) processes. The unexpected Cyt-C¹⁷⁺ peak is attributed tentatively to a deprotonation (DP) process of the Cyt-C parent ions. This new and unexpected channel has never been observed for other smaller biological molecules. This DP process increases from Cyt- C^{15+} to Cyt- C^{19+} . A tentative explanation is based on the fast decreasing of proton affinities versus the charge of Cyt-C. During the collision process; the electric field of the projectile is high enough to eject the proton from the Cyt-C. Higher mass resolution spectra and kinetic energy dependence would be necessary to confirm this mechanism.



Figure 1. Mass spectra of Xe^{8+} + Cyt-C^{q+} (q=15-19). SEC, DEC and DP processes are observed.

References

[1] S. Bari, R. Hoekstra and T. Schlathölter 2010 Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys. 12 3376

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¹E-mail: smartin@univ-lyon1.fr

²E-mail: chen@univ-lyon1.fr