

# Photoredox chemistry of iodomercuroate(II) complexes in acetonitrile

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## Abstract

The stepwise formation constants of the kinetically labile iodomercuroates(II) in acetonitrile are relatively high; even for the tetraiodo complex a value of 1220 was determined. Ligand-to-metal charge transfer transitions of different energies and intensities feature the ultraviolet spectra of these compounds. Photolysis of their CH<sub>3</sub>CN solution results in the formation of Hg(I) and I<sup>•</sup> or I<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> as primary products. The quantum yields of this reaction are 0.8 and 0.41 for HgI<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> and HgI<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>, respectively, at 355 nm excitation in a deaerated system. Due to the very efficient back reaction HgI<sub>2</sub> does not undergo permanent photoredox change, while irradiation of tri- and tetraiodomercuroate(II) complexes leads to the accumulation of I<sub>2</sub> and I<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>. The efficiencies of these overall reactions are rather low (0.07 and 0.02 at 333 nm), compared to the primary quantum yields, because of the fast reconversion.

*Key words:* Photochemistry; Redox reactions; Mercury complexes; Iodo complexes

## Introduction

Mercury(II) cation possesses filled d and empty s and p subshells, thus its chemical features are similar to both transition and main-group metal ions. Formation of kinetically labile complexes with halo and pseudohalo ligands in water and different non-aqueous solvents is characteristic for Hg<sup>2+</sup>, like other metal ions with (n-1)d<sup>10</sup>ns<sup>0</sup> electronic configuration [1, 2]. Ligand-to-metal charge transfer transitions determine the spectral features of the halomercuroate(II) complexes. The corresponding bands in their absorption spectra significantly depend on the coordination number [3]. The individual photochemical activities of the different HgX<sub>n</sub><sup>(n-2)-</sup> complexes can also be strongly affected by n.

Inorganic mercury(II) complexes were photochemically studied many years ago [4], but their further investigation in this respect has been rather recently started [5]. In all cases studied so far, the LMCT reaction was the primary photochemical step, resulting in the reduction of the Hg(II) center [6, 7]. Similarly, photoinduced reduction of mercury(II) was observed in the metal-to-metal charge transfer excitation of the

[(NC)<sub>2</sub>Hg<sup>II</sup>NCFe(CN)<sub>5</sub>]<sup>4-</sup> and [Hg<sup>II</sup>Co<sub>2</sub>I(CN)<sub>10</sub>]<sup>6-</sup> complexes [8]. In flash photolyses investigation of HgX<sub>2</sub> and HgX<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> (X=Cl, Br, I) in aqueous solutions formation of X<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> radical ions was detected [9], but no quantum yield determination by either flash or CW irradiation was carried out.

Since aprotic solvents cannot strongly coordinate to mercury(II), the stability of the halomercuroate(II) complexes in them are much higher than in protic media [1, 3]. Thus, a relatively small change in the ligand concentration can significantly influence the complex equilibria of halomercuroates(II) in solvents such as acetonitrile. The aim of our work was to study the light induced reactions of HgI<sub>n</sub><sup>(n-2)-</sup> complexes, in order to determine the role of the coordination number in the photoactivity and the elementary steps of the reaction mechanism.

## Experimental

Dry spectrograde acetonitrile was applied as solvent. Stock solutions of reagent grade and properly dried HgI<sub>2</sub> and Et<sub>4</sub>NI were used to prepare the solutions of desired metal and ligand concentrations for spectral

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and photochemical measurements. Similarly pure iodine served for calibration.

An Uvikon 860 double-beam spectrophotometer was utilized for taking absorption spectra in 1 cm and 1 mm quartz cuvettes. Typically 2.5 cm<sup>3</sup> solutions were irradiated in 1 cm cells at room temperature. Deaerated samples were prepared by purging with CH<sub>3</sub>CN-saturated Ar for at least 1 h before the photolysis. The light source was a Hanovia Xe/Hg 977 B-1 (1000 W) lamp equipped with a Schoeffel GM 250-1 monochromator. A Polytec pyroelectric radiometer calibrated and equipped with an RkP-345 detector was applied for determination of the incident light intensity. Samples used for quantum yield measurements absorbed nearly 100% at the excitation wavelengths.

Laser flash photolysis experiments were carried out with a system described elsewhere [10]. For excitation 266 and 355 nm pulses of *c.* 15 ns duration were utilized in these measurements. Aberchrome-540 was employed as an actinometer at 355 nm [11]. A constant absorbance of 0.4 was adjusted in the samples for actinometry at this wavelength.

## Results

### Spectroscopy and equilibria

The UV absorption spectrum of HgI<sub>2</sub> in CH<sub>3</sub>CN displays a relatively broad band at 265–267 nm and a more intense peak at 211 nm (Fig. 1, curve a). The spectrum does not obey Beer's law as was earlier experienced [12]. Addition of iodide ion (in 10<sup>-5</sup> M increments) to a 10<sup>-4</sup> M solution of HgI<sub>2</sub> gives rise to new absorption bands at 217, 256 and 301 nm, and a shoulder at 340 nm. The absorbance increases at these wavelengths are proportional to the amount of added I<sup>-</sup> ions (up to about 60% of the HgI<sub>2</sub> concentration) (Fig. 1). The iodide ions added are quantitatively coordinated by the diiodo species, because the stepwise formation constant of HgI<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, *K*<sub>3</sub>, in CH<sub>3</sub>CN is rather

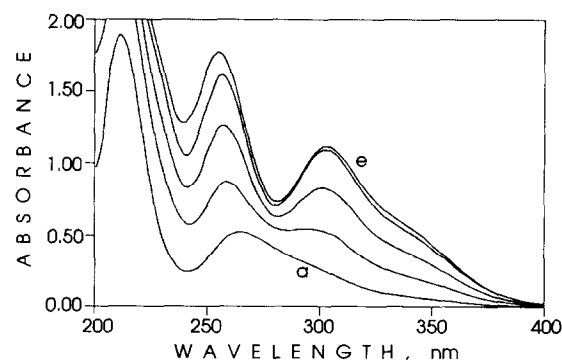


Fig. 1. UV absorption spectra changes (a→e) obtained upon addition of iodide (in  $2 \times 10^{-5}$  M increments) to HgI<sub>2</sub> ( $10^{-4}$  M) in acetonitrile at room temperature,  $l=1$  cm, reference solution=pure CH<sub>3</sub>CN.

high (*c.*  $10^8$  M<sup>-1</sup>) [13]. Thus, using pure CH<sub>3</sub>CN as reference solution, the molar absorbance of the triiodo complex can be directly determined from the slope of the  $A_{301}$  versus  $C_1(\text{added})$  plot (not shown), which is the difference between the extinction coefficients of HgI<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> and HgI<sub>2</sub> at 301 nm. A similar relationship is valid for the other band maximum (256 nm). The extinction coefficients of the different iodo-mercurate(II) complexes in acetonitrile at the absorption maxima are summarized in Table 1.

Upon increasing the amount of added iodide ( $C_1(\text{added}) > C_{\text{HgI}_2}$ ), new bands arise at 273 and 329 nm, while the peak at 301 nm disappears, resulting in two isosbestic points (Fig. 2). This is a clear indication that mercury(II) is distributed between two complexes, i.e. HgI<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> and HgI<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>, in equilibrium. The spectra shown in Fig. 2 were measured against reference solutions which contained the same amount of added iodide as the samples. Thus, due to the absorbance of I<sup>-</sup>, the shape of the spectra involves the effect of the iodide imbalance (as a consequence of the coordination in the samples, decreasing [I<sup>-</sup>]) at wavelengths below 280 nm. This effect was taken into account at the determination of the molar absorbance for HgI<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> at 273 nm. At high concentrations of excess iodide, its very strong absorbance hampers the measurement of

TABLE 1. Band maxima and molar absorbances of iodo-mercurate(II) complexes in acetonitrile

Complex	$\lambda_{\text{max}}$ (nm) ( $\epsilon$ (M <sup>-1</sup> cm <sup>-1</sup> ))	
HgI <sub>2</sub>	211 ( $1.9 \times 10^4$ )	265–267 ( $5.2 \times 10^3$ ) <sup>a</sup>
HgI <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup>	217 ( $3.5 \times 10^4$ )	256 ( $2.28 \times 10^4$ )
	301 ( $1.61 \times 10^4$ )	340 ( $8.0 \times 10^3$ ) <sup>b</sup>
HgI <sub>4</sub> <sup>2-</sup>	273 ( $3.79 \times 10^4$ )	329 ( $2.24 \times 10^4$ )

<sup>a</sup>Molar absorbances for HgI<sub>2</sub> are estimated in the  $0.5\text{--}4 \times 10^{-4}$  M range, because no satisfactory Beer's law plot was obtained for them. <sup>b</sup>Shoulder.

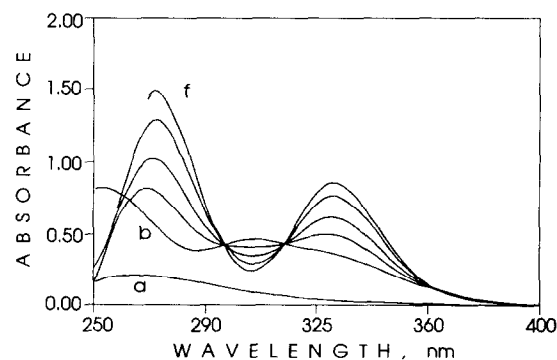


Fig. 2. UV spectra changes obtained upon addition of (a) 0, (b)  $2.14 \times 10^{-4}$ , (c)  $4.09 \times 10^{-4}$ , (d)  $1.46 \times 10^{-3}$ , (e)  $3.76 \times 10^{-3}$  and (f)  $4.81 \times 10^{-2}$  M iodide to HgI<sub>2</sub> ( $4 \times 10^{-4}$  M) in acetonitrile at room temperature,  $l=0.1$  cm. The same amounts of iodide were added to the reference solution.

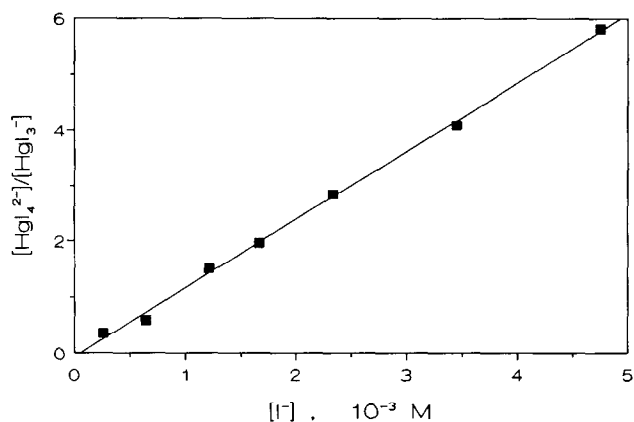


Fig. 3. Concentration ratio of tetra- and triiodomercurate(II) vs. free-ligand concentration in acetonitrile at room temperature ( $C_{\text{Hg(II)}} = 4 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ ).

the spectra below 268 nm (Fig. 2, curve f). Nearly 100% conversion to tetraiodo complex can be achieved by addition of 0.02 M excess  $\text{I}^-$ . Taking the molar absorbance of this system at 329 nm as that of  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  and knowing the extinction coefficient of  $\text{HgI}_3^-$  at the same wavelength, the stepwise formation constant of the former species can be determined, using the absorbances at different  $[\text{I}^-]$  values. On the basis of the equation of the complex formation constant (eqn. (1)) the concentration ratio of  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  and  $\text{HgI}_3^-$  ( $R = [\text{HgI}_4^{2-}]/[\text{HgI}_3^-]$ ) linearly depends on  $[\text{I}^-]$ .

$$K_4 = [\text{HgI}_4^{2-}]/([\text{HgI}_3^-][\text{I}^-]) \quad (1)$$

After calculation of the actual concentrations of tri- and tetraiodo species at various values of  $[\text{I}^-]$ , the slope of the  $R$  versus  $[\text{I}^-]$  plot (Fig. 3) gives  $K_4$  ( $1220 \pm 80 \text{ M}^{-1}$ , at  $0.5\text{--}5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$  ionic strength). This is somewhat higher than the value determined by Coetzee *et al.* with polarography ( $631 \text{ M}^{-1}$ ) [13], but differs significantly from the earlier results obtained by solubility ( $75 \text{ M}^{-1}$ ) [14] and conductometry ( $40 \text{ M}^{-1}$ ) [15]. A similar tendency was experienced in the case of  $\text{HgCl}_4^{2-}$  [16], indicating that formation constants determined on the basis of different physicochemical properties can strongly deviate from each other in these systems.

#### Continuous photolysis

Irradiation of  $\text{HgI}_2$  in argon-saturated  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$  ( $4 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ ) did not cause any permanent chemical change either at 254 or 313 nm excitation wavelength. A similar experience was found with an aerated solution.

Addition of iodide to the system to give 60%  $\text{HgI}_3^-$  and 40%  $\text{HgI}_2$  ( $C_{\text{Hg(II)}} = 4 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ ) led to a significant change in the photochemical behavior; formation of  $\text{I}_2$  was detected upon irradiation in the 313–333 nm range. The concentration of the iodine produced was spectrophotometrically monitored at 400 nm, where the

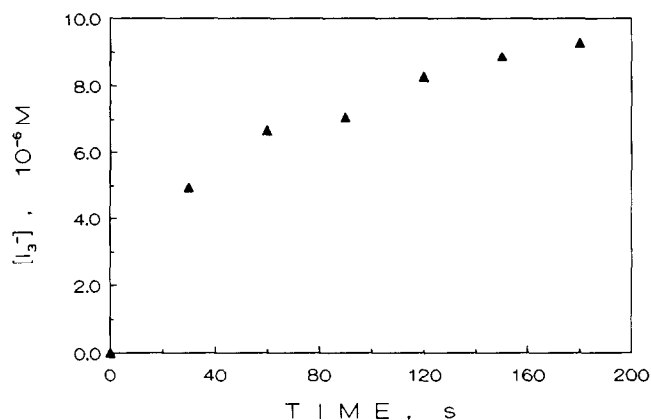


Fig. 4. Accumulation of  $\text{I}_3^-$  during the photolysis of  $4 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$   $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  in argon-saturated  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$  at 333 nm irradiation wavelength ( $[\text{I}^-] = 4 \times 10^{-2} \text{ M}$ ).

absorbance of the  $\text{Hg(II)}$  complexes is negligible. The rate of the iodine production slowed down relatively fast as can be seen in Fig. 4. This phenomenon indicates a rather efficient back reaction, which is confirmed by the fact that reconversion of the irradiated solution containing *c.*  $2 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$   $\text{I}_2$  reached more than 50% overnight. Thus, the quantum yield for the iodine production was determined from the initial slope of the  $[\text{I}_2]$  versus irradiation time plot. In argon-saturated solution a value of 0.065 was obtained. Presence of air caused a decrease in the quantum yield ( $\Phi = 0.035$ ) at 333 nm.

In solution containing  $4 \times 10^{-2} \text{ M}$   $\text{Et}_4\text{NI}$  and  $4 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$   $\text{HgI}_2$  mercury(II) exists as  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$ . Photolysis of such a solution resulted in the formation of  $\text{I}_3^-$ . Its photoproduction also slowed down rather rapidly. The quantum yields determined from the initial slopes were found to be significantly lower than for the photolysis of the  $\text{HgI}_3^-/\text{HgI}_2$  system (0.02 in argon-saturated and 0.015 in aerated solution at 333 nm). Addition of  $\text{EtOH}$  did not affect the photochemical behavior of the iodomercurate(II) complexes in acetonitrile.

#### Flash photolysis

A solution of  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  ( $C_{\text{Hg(II)}} = 4.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ,  $[\text{I}^-] = 4 \times 10^{-2} \text{ M}$ ) was also excited by 15 ns laser pulses at 355 nm. Two intermediates were detected; a short-lived one, which appeared right after the pulse, and a longer-lived one, which was apparently formed via decay of the former species. The spectrum of the shorter-lived intermediate was taken 1  $\mu\text{s}$  after the pulse and displays an intense band at 390 nm (Fig. 5). This is in good accordance with the spectrum of  $\text{I}_2^-$  in aqueous solution [17]. Analysis of this transient at 390 nm, taking the residual absorbance (after 200  $\mu\text{s}$ ) into consideration, shows that it obeys a second order kinetics (Fig. 6) with the  $k/\epsilon$  value of  $3.0 \times 10^5 \text{ cm s}^{-1}$ . Taking 9400

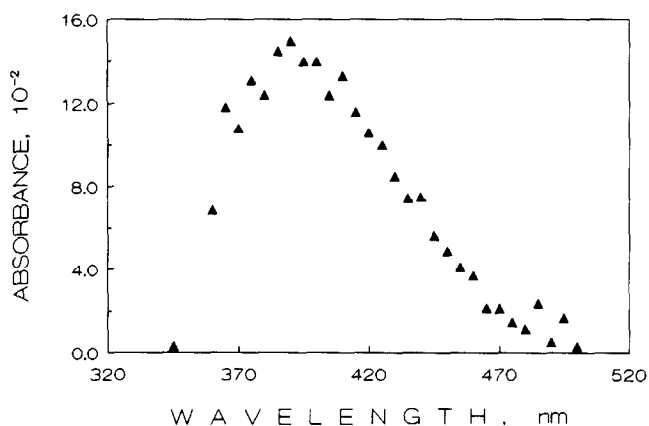


Fig. 5. Transient absorption spectrum recorded 1  $\mu$ s after a 355 nm laser pulse in acetonitrile solution of  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  ( $C_{\text{Hg(II)}} = 4.5 \times 10^{-5}$  M,  $[\text{I}^-] = 4 \times 10^{-2}$  M,  $l = 1$  cm).

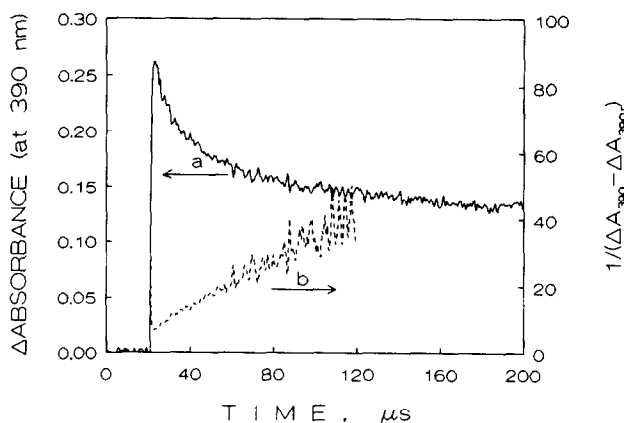


Fig. 6. Transient absorption at 390 nm (conditions as in Fig. 5).

$\text{M}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-1}$  as the molar absorbance of  $\text{I}_2^-$  at 390 nm [17], although it was measured in aqueous solution, the rate constant of the decay is  $2.8 \times 10^9 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ . This high value indicates a diffusion controlled reaction and agrees fairly well with the observation in the aqueous system [9].

The spectrum of the longer-lived intermediate (not shown) proved to be equal to that of  $\text{I}_3^-$ , having a maximum at 360 nm. This transient also obeys a second order kinetics with a rate constant of  $2.6 \times 10^8 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ . Flash photolysis experiments ( $\lambda_{\text{ir}} = 355$  nm) with solutions containing 60%  $\text{HgI}_3^-$  and 40%  $\text{HgI}_2$  gave similar results, but the intensity of the transients was much lower as a consequence of the most negligible free iodide concentration. It is worth mentioning at this point that molar absorbances of  $\text{I}_3^-$  in the 300–400 nm range are about eight times higher than those of  $\text{I}_2$ . The quantum yield for the formation of diiodide in the photoreaction of  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  was determined from the peak value of the transient at 390 nm ( $\Phi = 0.41$ , using  $9400 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-1}$  as the molar absorbance of  $\text{I}_2^-$ ). On the basis of the residual absorbance at this wavelength

after 200  $\mu$ s, about 75% of  $\text{I}_2^-$  formed in the photoinduced reaction was converted to  $\text{I}_3^-$ . Quantum yield calculated in a similar way for the  $\text{HgI}_2/\text{HgI}_3^-$  system would not be correct because the molar absorbance used for the previous case (with significant excess of  $\text{I}^-$ ) is not appropriate here. Thus, a reasonable estimation can be made for  $\Phi$  from the residual absorbance (after 200  $\mu$ s) representing  $\text{I}_2$  formed from the primary product. Provided the conversion of the primary products (probably a mixture of  $\text{I}_2^-$  and  $\text{I}^-$ ) is also about 75%, the quantum yield for the shorter-lived intermediate is *c.* 0.8.

Flash irradiation of  $\text{HgI}_2$  at 355 nm results in no detectable transient, due to the very low absorbance. Excitation at 266 nm, however, led to the appearance of a weak unidentified transient, the spectrum of which is rather featureless with an uncertain maximum in the 300–320 nm range. Its decay obeys a mixed (first and second) order kinetics, and no second step was experienced in the transient at 310 nm. No residual absorbance was observed either.

The presence of air or EtOH did not cause any effect in these flash photolysis experiments.

## Discussion

### Spectroscopy and equilibria

Although the absorption spectra of the individual iodo-mercurate(II) complexes are rather different, the characteristic bands in all the three cases are attributed to LMCT transitions. The significant deviations in the molecular structures, bond strengths, orbital symmetries and energies, however, can result in different spectral properties. The linear  $\text{HgI}_2$  complex displays a rather sharp band at 211 nm and a weaker one at 265–267 nm (Fig. 1). The latter band is assigned as a  $\pi$ -LMCT transition, which can be either  $^1\Sigma_g^+ \rightarrow ^1\Pi_u$  involving the ligand  $p_\pi$  orbitals (as  $1\pi_u$  MO) and the metal 6s orbital (as  $3\sigma_g^+$  MO), or  $^1\Sigma_g^+ \rightarrow ^1\Sigma_u^+$  involving the ligand  $p_\pi$  orbitals (as  $1\pi_g$  MO) and the metal 6p orbital (as  $2\pi_u$  MO) [12, 18]. The higher energy band is attributed to a combination of  $d \rightarrow p$  and  $\sigma$ -LMCT transitions ( $^1\Sigma_g^+ \rightarrow \Pi_u$ ). In the latter one an electron is promoted from the halogen's  $p_\sigma$  orbital (as  $1\sigma_g^+$  MO) to the  $2\pi_u$  MO.

The pyramidal [19]  $\text{HgI}_3^-$  ion exhibits three bands at 220, 256 and 301 nm, and a shoulder at 343 nm (Fig. 1). The 256 and 301 nm bands are attributed to  $^1A_1 \rightarrow ^1E$  transitions from the ligand p orbitals (as 3e and 4e MOs) to the metal 6s orbital (as  $4a_1$  MO) [20]. The appearance of the shoulder at 340 nm can be explained by the mixing of  $^1E$  and  $^3E$  states (via spin-orbit coupling), which makes the corresponding spin-forbidden transition,  $^1A_1 \rightarrow ^3E$ , partially allowed

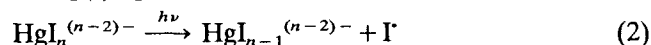
[19, 21]. The highest energy band can also be assigned as a  ${}^1A_1 \rightarrow {}^1E$  transition in which an electron is excited from the  $3a_1$  MO consisting mainly of the halogen's p orbital to the  $4a_1$  MO.

The  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  ion has a tetrahedral symmetry and displays two intense bands at 273 and 329 nm. The stronger one (273 nm) is assigned as a  ${}^1A_1 \rightarrow {}^1T_2$  transition from the  $t_2$  MO mainly composed of the iodide's  $p_\pi$  orbital to the  $a_1$  MO consisting basically of the Hg's 6s orbital [22, 23]. The lower energy band is attributed to the originally spin-forbidden  ${}^1A_1 \rightarrow {}^3T_2$  transition (involving the same orbitals), which, via spin-orbit coupling resulting in the mixing of the  ${}^3T_2$  and  ${}^1T_2$  states, becomes partially allowed. The filled d orbitals of Hg are non-bonding in all cases, thus in these complexes mercury behaves like main-group metals.

The stability constant of  $\text{HgI}_2$  in acetonitrile is about  $10^{38} \text{ M}^{-1}$  [13]. In aqueous systems  $\beta_2$  is significantly lower (c.  $10^{24} \text{ M}^{-1}$ ) [1], but high enough so that the dissociation of diiodomercurate(II) (at  $C > 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ) is negligible (<1%) even in protic solvents. For the triiodo species,  $\text{HgI}_3^-$ , however, the stepwise formation constant,  $K_3$ , in protic systems is less than  $10^4 \text{ M}^{-1}$  [13]. Thus, the quantitative formation of triiodomercurate(II) requires a considerable ligand excess. In the weakly coordinating  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$ , however, the rather high value of  $K_3$  ( $10^8 \text{ M}^{-1}$ ) [13] makes it possible for the iodide ions added to  $\text{HgI}_2$  (up to about 60% of  $C_{\text{HgI}_2}$ ) to be totally taken up via formation of triiodo species. Such a difference between the equilibrium constants in  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$  compared to protic solvents can also be experienced in the case of  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  ( $K_4 = 10^2\text{--}10^3 \text{ M}^{-1}$  in  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$  and  $0.4 \text{ M}^{-1}$  in  $\text{MeOH}$  [3]). Similar tendencies can be observed for other halomercurates. It is worth mentioning that the order of the formation constants for the trihalomercurates is  $\text{I} > \text{Br} > \text{Cl}$ , while for the tetrahalo species it is the reverse, independent of the solvent. This phenomenon demonstrates how the change in the structure of these complexes affects their stability as a function of the ligand.

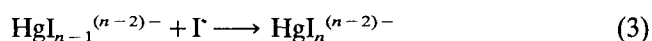
### Photochemistry

The results of both the continuous and the flash photolysis experiments indicate that the primary photochemical reaction of iodomercurate(II) complexes in acetonitrile, similarly to the corresponding chloromercurates [16], is an LMCT process with a formation of Hg(I) species and  $\text{I}^-$ .



The primary products undergo different parallel or consecutive thermal reactions. In the case of  $\text{HgI}_2$  the direct back reaction (eqn. (3)) is the most probable way because no permanent chemical change was experienced in continuous photolysis and the transient

observed in the flash photolysis experiments decays in one step without residual absorbance.



When iodide ions of suitable concentration were present in the solutions, formation of  $\text{I}_2^-$  could be detected, due to reaction (4).



This intermediate can undergo recombination (eqn. (5)) or back reaction (reconversion) with Hg(I) species (eqn. (6)).



In this competition the recombination process is predominant as indicated by the flash photolysis experiments, due to the higher rate constant ( $k_5 = 2.8 \times 10^9 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ).

The Hg(I) monomer formed in the primary reaction (eqn. (2)) can recombine to give  $\text{Hg}_2\text{I}_2$ . The appearance of such a species could not be noticed in this system because of the very low conversion rate and a probable oversaturation.

Although the triiodide ion is a stable species in pure  $\text{I}^-$  solution, the photochemically produced ones in this system disappear in a second order process, which can be a reconversion with Hg(I) species formed (eqn. (7)).



The quantum yield for the primary reaction (eqn. (2)) is rather high for both  $\text{HgI}_3^-$  (c. 0.8) and  $\text{HgI}_4^{2-}$  (0.41) complexes, while the corresponding overall quantum yields for  $\text{I}_2$  or  $\text{I}_3^-$  production (accumulation) are about one order of magnitude lower (0.065 and 0.02). This confirms that back reactions and reconversions are predominant in these systems and efficiently hinder the accumulation of the final products. That is why the apparent rate of the  $\text{I}_2$  or  $\text{I}_3^-$  generation rapidly decreases and a reconversion of the irradiated system can be observed in the dark.

The individual quantum yields of the triiodo complex are significantly higher than those of the tetraiodo species for both the primary and the overall processes. A similar tendency was experienced for the photoactivity of the corresponding chloromercurates(II) [16]. In the case of the primary photoreaction this phenomenon may be interpreted by the relation of the corresponding molar absorbances. The lifetime of an excited state is inversely proportional to the oscillator strength, and, thus, to the molar absorbances. Since in the case of the iodomercurate(II) complexes in the vicinity of the excitation wavelength (333 nm) the extinction coefficients of the band maxima increase upon coordination

of more ligands, shorter excited-state lifetimes result and, thus, a lower probability for the LMCT reaction. Unfortunately, in the case of  $\text{HgI}_2$  no quantum yield could be determined for the primary reaction, while, due to the very fast back reaction (eqn. (2)), no overall net reaction could be observed. However, this cannot exclude the fact that the efficiency of the primary reaction in this case is even higher than those for the other two iodo complexes. Elucidation of this problem requires further kinetic studies.

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