

THE THz/FIR SPECTRUM OF SMALL WATER CLUSTERS IN HELIUM NANODROPLETS

GERHARD SCHWAAB, RAFFAEL SCHWAN, DEVENDRA MANI, NITISH PAL, ARGHYA DEY, *Physikalische Chemie II, Ruhr University Bochum, Bochum, Germany*; BRITTA REDLICH, *FELIX Laboratory, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands*; LEX VAN DER MEER, *Institute for Molecules and Materials (IMM), Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, Netherlands*; MARTINA HAVENITH^a, *Physikalische Chemie II, Ruhr University Bochum, Bochum, Germany*.

The microscopic properties of water that are relevant for bulk solvation processes are still not fully understood. Here, we combine mass selective Helium nanodroplet spectroscopy with the powerful Terahertz (THz) and far-infrared (FIR) capabilities of the free electron laser facility FELIX to study the fingerprint of small neutral water clusters in the wavelength range from 90-900cm⁻¹. Helium nanodroplets are a gentle, superfluid matrix and allow aggregation of pre-cooled moieties at ultra-cold temperatures (0.37 K). The fast cooling rate allows in some cases to stabilize not only the global minimum structure but also local minimum structures. The FELIX facility in Nijmegen provides narrowband ($\Delta\nu/\nu = 0.5\%$) pulsed radiation covering the frequency range from 80–3300 cm⁻¹. We used a repetition rate of 10 Hz and typical pulse energies from 10 mJ at the 90cm⁻¹ and 40 mJ at 900cm⁻¹. This corresponds to average powers of 100–400 mW far beyond those available using other radiation sources in this frequency range. The observed spectrum is exceptionally rich and includes lines that are close to or below our resolution limit. By mass selective detection and by varying the pickup pressure, we were able to identify contributions from dimer, trimer, tetramer and pentamer. The number of resonances indicates stabilization of at least two trimer structures in He nanodroplets. A comparison with theoretical predictions is on the way. We are confident that our experiments will contribute to understand the very special behavior of water in a bottom up approach.

^aThis work was supported by the Cluster of Excellence RESOLV (Ruhr-Universität, EXC1069) funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft