

The Crystal Structure of Triketoindane (Anhydrous Ninhydrin). A Structure Showing Close C=O...C Interactions

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Several recent crystal structure analyses have shown close approaches of about 2.8 Å between carbonyl carbon and oxygen atoms in different molecules. The C=O...C angles in each case are in the range $158 \pm 4^\circ$. Perhaps the most interesting one is alloxan where the central carbon atom of the α , β , γ -triketo group is in close contact (2.79 Å) with two crystallographically equivalent α (or γ) oxygen atoms. There is no hydrogen bonding in the structure despite the presence of two >NH groups per molecule. The situation in alloxan and the other compounds with close C...O approaches was thought to be due to the presence of a greater charge than usual on the carbonyl carbon atom involved. It was thought that a similar situation would be found in triketoindane because of the inductive effects of O_α and O_γ . Two crystalline forms were discovered. An orthorhombic form with the space group *Pbca* and a tetragonal one which is *I4₁cd*.

The structure of the tetragonal form has been worked out. The molecule has implied twofold rotational symmetry and is planar within the limits of the analysis, and thus shows the full *mm* symmetry of the configurational formula in the crystal. The dimensions of the triketo group are almost identical with the alloxan values. In particular β CO is slightly short at 1.189 Å (1.186 Å in alloxan). This shortening may be due to induction of electrons from β C by the adjacent carbonyl group.

The intermolecular arrangement is such that β C is approached to within 2.83 Å from both sides of the molecular plane by α O and γ O in crystallographically equivalent positions. The C=O...C angle is 151° . This is a similar situation to the one in alloxan, as expected.

This latest example strengthens the conclusion that the close C...O approaches observed to date are real structural features with a common cause. This is considered to be the attraction for a charge centre $C^{\delta+}$ by the oxygen end of a $C^{\delta+}=O^{\delta-}$ dipole. This attraction is large in these examples and manifests itself as a close approach although it may occur more generally in a weaker form in other compounds.

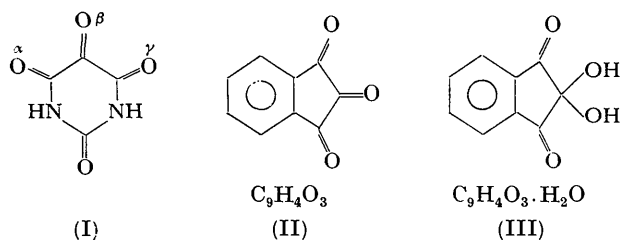
Introduction

Although numerous crystal structures of hydrogen-bonded organic compounds have been studied, there appear to be relatively few compounds in which, although the substance would normally crystallize as a hydrogen-bonded structure, as a hydrate for instance, care has been taken to examine the molecule in an environment with too few hydrogen atoms for complete hydrogen bonding of all electronegative atoms. One reason for this is that generally, if such compounds crystallize, they do so only with difficulty or decompose to a hydrate by reacting with atmospheric moisture. The author has examined four such proton-deficient compounds, and in three of them, namely anhydrous barbituric acid, alloxan and ninhydrin (Bolton, 1963, 1964*a* and this work) non-hydrogen-bonded carbonyl carbon and oxygen atoms are involved in close approaches. In parabanic acid (Davies & Blum, 1953) and chloranil (Chu, Jeffrey & Sakurai, 1963) there are similar close interactions. The O...C distances are about 2.8 Å and the asso-

ciated C=O...C angles are all in the range 155° to 163° . In anhydrous alloxan (I) (Bolton, 1964*a*) where there are two >NH hydrogen atoms and four carbonyl oxygen atoms per molecule, the structure might be expected to be determined by the interplay of hydrogen bonding and van der Waals packing forces. It is without exception the case in structures of amides and imides so far reported that where the possibility of hydrogen bonding exists it is utilized in the actual crystal structure. However, in alloxan there is no hydrogen bonding at all, but the molecules are arranged so that the carbon atom of the central carbonyl group, C_β , is approached from both sides of the pyrimidine ring by O_α and O_γ in crystallographically equivalent positions at distances of 2.79 Å. It appears then that the C...O interactions associated with the close approaches mentioned above are predominant over possible hydrogen bonding in determining the structure of alloxan. The tentative explanation given for these interactions (Bolton, 1964*a*) is that in each case the carbon atom has a residual positive charge due to induction of electrons by electronegative ring substituents and is an electrostatic centre of attraction for the oxygen end of

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$C^{\delta+}=O^{\delta-}$ dipoles of adjacent molecules. If this is correct, the situation in alloxan would be due to a residual positive charge on the β keto carbon atom caused by the strong inductive effect of the α and γ CO groups. One might therefore expect a similar situation to occur in the crystal structures of other proton deficient α,β,γ -triketones, and it would be interesting to compare these with alloxan. There are no data of this kind available, and the structure of α,β,γ -triketointhane (II) has been examined to remedy this.



Experimental

Triketointhane is obtained from water as the monohydrate (III), which is the reagent ninhydrin, widely used as a test for amino acids with free NH_2 groups. This substance is chemically very similar to alloxan monohydrate (Ruhemann, 1911) and crystals of the anhydrous substance were obtained in the same way as anhydrous alloxan, by slowly heating ninhydrin *in vacuo* below $90^\circ C$ to remove the chemically attached water, then subliming at $120^\circ C$.

Two crystalline forms were obtained, and although (III) is colourless, both anhydrous forms were dark red in keeping with the presence of the strongly bathochromic triketo group in (II). The crystal data are:

Orthorhombic form:

$$a = 15.524 \pm 0.008, \quad b = 14.160 \pm 0.008, \\ c = 6.380 \pm 0.005 \text{ \AA} . \\ D_m = 1.52, \quad D_x = 1.526 \text{ g.cm}^{-3}; \quad Z = 8 .$$

Systematic absences $hk0$, $0kl$ and $h0l$ for h , k and l odd respectively give the space group uniquely as $Pbca$. Crystals of this form were present as small round pieces of indeterminate habit.

Tetragonal form:

$$a = 7.058 \pm 0.005, \quad c = 28.77 \pm 0.01 \text{ \AA} . \\ D_m = 1.48, \quad D_x = 1.490 \text{ g.cm}^{-3}; \quad Z = 8 .$$

The systematic absences hkl for $h+k+l \neq 2n$, hhl for $2h+l \neq 4n$ and $0kl$ for $l \neq 2n$, give the space group as $I4_1cd$. This form was obtained as long thin needles, acicular about c . The range of stability of the two polymorphs is not known; both forms were obtained together in all the sublimations.

The crystals decomposed to (III) immediately, on contact with water, and slowly in air. By coating with petroleum jelly it was possible to keep a single crystal unchanged for up to a week. Data have been collected for both modifications, but only the tetragonal one is described here. Intensities were recorded on $h0l$ to $h5l$ equi-inclination Weissenberg photographs with $Cu K\alpha$ radiation. This gave 380 of the possible 400 reflexions in the $Cu K\alpha$ sphere. These were eye-estimated and after reduction to structure amplitudes were placed on the same scale by internal correlation and by comparison with photographs taken with the crystal mounted about $[110]$.

As there are 16 equivalent positions in the space group and 8 molecules in the unit cell, the molecule must have an implied twofold rotation axis of symmetry. This can only be the line AB in Fig. 1, through $C(1)$, $O(1)$ and the mid point of the bond $C(5)C(5')$. With this coincident with $x=y=0$ it is only necessary to find a single parameter, the angle (φ) between the molecular plane and the x or y axis, to solve the structure in principle, if the molecular configuration (II) is assumed *a priori*. It may be mentioned, to clarify this, that in this space group the origin of the unit cell can be chosen arbitrarily anywhere along $x=y=0$ and therefore a set of relative z coordinates based on (II) will be necessarily a good approximation to the correct ones. It was a simple matter to find φ by rotating the molecule, which projects as a line of atoms in the (001) projection (Fig. 1) within the

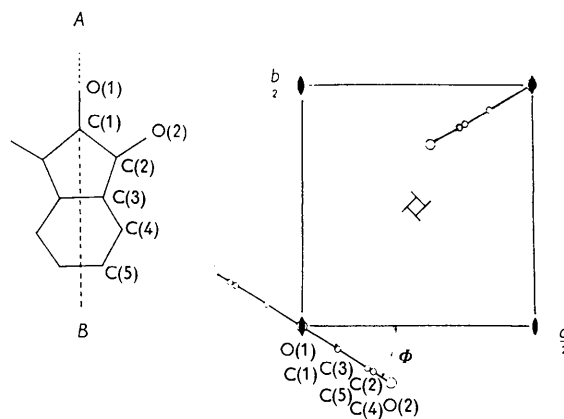


Fig. 1. Projection of the structure of triketointhane down the tetrad axis. The molecules lie with the axis AB coincident with the twofold rotation axis at $x=y=0$. Only the angle φ was required to solve the structure in principle.

volume allowed by packing considerations, and calculating $hk0$ structure factor agreement indices for each case. The lowest R value coincided with the best packing model and the x and y coordinates from this, together with z coordinates allocated on the basis of assumed bond lengths and angles, were used to calculate hkl structure factors. The first three-dimen-

standard deviations are given in Table 2. The anisotropic thermal parameters shown alongside have $\sigma(B_{ii})=0.22 \text{ \AA}^2$ and $\sigma(B_{ij})=0.40 \text{ \AA}^2$.

Table 2. Atomic coordinates (\AA) and temperature parameters (\AA^2)

	<i>x</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>z</i>	e.s.d.
C(1)	0	0	2.2577	0.0090
C(2)	1.0532	0.6011	1.3301	0.0067
C(3)	0.6057	0.3426	-0.0534	0.0062
C(4)	1.2381	0.6766	-1.2467	0.0067
C(5)	0.6167	0.3453	-2.4200	0.0068
O(1)	0	0	3.4447	0.0075
O(2)	2.0722	1.1656	1.7130	0.0060
H(1)	1.120	0.585	-3.370	—
H(2)	2.190	1.200	1.245	—

Atom	<i>B</i> ₁₁	<i>B</i> ₂₂	<i>B</i> ₃₃	<i>B</i> ₁₂	<i>B</i> ₁₃	<i>B</i> ₂₃
C(2)	3.74	2.25	3.14	-0.04	0.45	-0.87
C(3)	3.20	2.34	2.74	0.07	-0.36	-0.09
C(4)	3.11	3.21	2.97	-0.48	1.30	0.39
C(5)	3.68	4.55	2.70	1.70	1.08	0.97
O(2)	5.02	4.87	4.09	-5.55	1.06	-3.00

Isotropic: $B(C(1))=2.87$, $B(O(1))=3.44 \text{ \AA}^2$.

Discussion

The triketoindane molecule

The molecular dimensions are shown in Fig. 2. The molecule has a twofold axis of symmetry passing through the β keto bond C(1)O(1) and is planar within the limits of the determination. The equation for the molecular plane is $0.4891x - 0.8722y = 0$. The deviations from this are C(2) = -0.010 , C(3) = -0.003 , C(4) = 0.015 , and C(5) = 0 and O(2) = -0.004 \AA . In the crystal the molecule thus shows the full *mm* symmetry of its configurational formula.

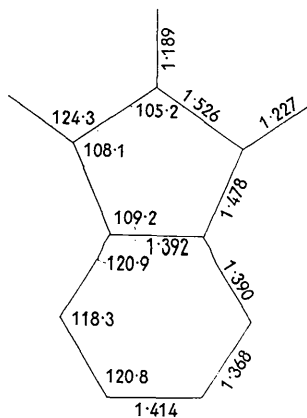
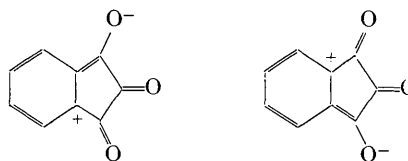


Fig. 2. The dimensions of the triketoindane molecule.

None of the CC bond lengths show highly significant differences from the values of 1.397 and 1.504 \AA

(Pauling, 1960) to be expected from the configurational formula; however, the differences that do exist are systematic, and consistent with resonance contributions of a total of about 7% from the charged forms:



The dimensions of the triketo group here are very similar to those in alloxan, thus $\beta \text{ CO} = 1.189 \text{ \AA}$ (1.186 in alloxan), $\alpha \text{ CO} = 1.227 \text{ \AA}$ (1.213) and $\alpha\beta \text{ CC} = 1.526 \text{ \AA}$ (1.521). It is particularly interesting that $\beta \text{ CO}$ is in both cases less than the usual $\text{C}=\text{O}$ distance of 1.21 \AA , as it is not possible to account for the shortening without postulating resonance contributions from structures with no bonds between C_β and C_α or C_γ . A possible explanation is that the induction of electrons away from C_β by the α and γ carbonyl groups leaves a slight residual positive charge on C_β which approaches more closely to O_β by electrostatic attraction. Another way of saying this is that a residual positive charge on C_β will reduce the electronegativity of this atom and consequently increase the Schomaker & Stevenson (1941) $\text{C}=\text{O}$ bond length correction term. It can easily be deduced that if this is correct the difference in electronegativity of C_β and O_β compatible with a CO bond length of 1.187 \AA is about 1.25 , an increase of 0.25 over the difference corresponding to the usual value of 1.21 \AA . This of course is a very tentative conclusion and because of the small differences in bond length concerned may be quite wrong. However, a positive charge on C_β is compatible with the role of this atom in the intermolecular structure (see introduction and below).

The intermolecular structure

An isometric drawing of the structure is shown in Fig. 3. At the same z level molecules are packed with their symmetry axes parallel to c . The resulting sheets of molecules are $c/4$ thick and are stacked parallel to (001), one above the other in a closest-packing arrangement. The intermolecular contacts (Table 3) between molecules in different sheets are all greater than the sum of the van der Waals radii. However, within a sheet (Fig. 3) each molecule has close links to its four nearest neighbours. These are through the α and γ carbonyl oxygen atoms and close approaches at C_β ($\text{O}(2)$, $\text{O}(2')$ and $\text{C}(1)$ respectively in Fig. 4) from both sides of the molecular plane. They link the molecules into a two-dimensional diamond mesh pattern (Fig. 4). These interactions are crystallographically equivalent and are 2.85 \AA

Table 3. *The intermolecular distances less than 4.0 Å*

C(1)(I)-H(1)(V)	3.52 Å
C(1)(I)-H(1)(VII)	2.93
C(1)(II)-O(2)(I)	2.83
C(1)(II)-C(2)(I)	3.95
C(1)(I)-C(5)(VII)	3.86
C(2)(II)-C(2)(I)	3.81
C(2)(II)-O(2)(I)	3.02
C(2)(III)-O(2)(I)	3.10
C(2)(I)-H(2)(V)	3.57
C(2)(II)-H(2)(I)	2.95
C(2)(III)-H(2)(I)	2.95
C(2)(I)-H(1)(VII)	3.12
C(3)(II)-C(4)(I)	3.80
C(3)(II)-O(2)(I)	3.34
C(3)(III)-O(2)(I)	3.39
C(3)(II)-H(2)(I)	3.06
C(3)(III)-H(2)(I)	3.07
C(4)(I)-C(4)(II)	3.68
C(4)(VII)-O(1)(I)	3.46
C(4)(II)-H(2)(I)	3.90
C(4)(III)-H(2)(I)	3.95
C(4)(I)-C(5)(II)	3.80
C(5)(I)-O(1)(VIII)	3.22
C(5)(I)-O(2)(IX)	3.71
C(5)(VII)-O(1)(I)	3.22
C(5)(V)-O(1)(I)	3.50
C(5)(II)-H(1)(I)	3.86
C(5)(VI)-O(2)(IX)	3.59
O(1)(I)-H(1)(V)	3.17
O(1)(I)-H(1)(VII)	2.51
O(1)(II)-O(2)(I)	3.27
O(2)(I)-O(2)(II)	3.58
O(2)(I)-O(2)(III)	3.73
O(2)(I)-H(1)(V)	3.23
O(2)(I)-H(1)(VII)	2.87
O(2)(II)-H(2)(I)	3.60
O(2)(III)-H(2)(I)	3.64
O(2)(IV)-H(2)(I)	3.60
O(2)(IX)-H(1)(VI)	2.94

(I)	x, y, z	(VI)	\bar{x}, \bar{y}, z
(II)	$\frac{1}{2}-x, \frac{1}{2}+y, z$	(VII)	$y, \frac{1}{2}-x, \frac{1}{2}+z$
(III)	$\frac{1}{2}+x, \frac{1}{2}-y, z$	(VIII)	$\frac{1}{2}-y, x, -\frac{1}{2}+z$
(IV)	$1-x, -y, z$	(IX)	$-y, \frac{1}{2}-x, -\frac{1}{2}+z$
(V)	$\frac{1}{2}-y, -x, \frac{1}{2}+z$		

(the normal C...O distance is about 3.1 Å, Pauling, 1960) with a C=O...C angle of 151°, which is similar to the values previously found (Bolton, 1964*a*, Table 4 where the mean values are 2.82 Å and 158°).

There is a close resemblance here to the situation in alloxan (see introduction), and Fig. 5 shows the arrangement of close C=O interactions for each molecule, for comparison. In particular it seems that a β -keto carbon interaction with α (γ) oxygen atoms, from both sides of the molecular plane, is an important factor in deciding the arrangement in the crystal. On the basis of simple hydrogen bonding and packing considerations a close similarity between the two structures would not be expected. However the factor in common between the two was forecast, or at least expected, by considerations of an until

recently unknown structural feature, namely a close C...O interaction associated with certain proton deficient structures (Bolton, 1964*a*). This strengthens the author's conclusion that the close approaches in the substances mentioned in the introduction are real

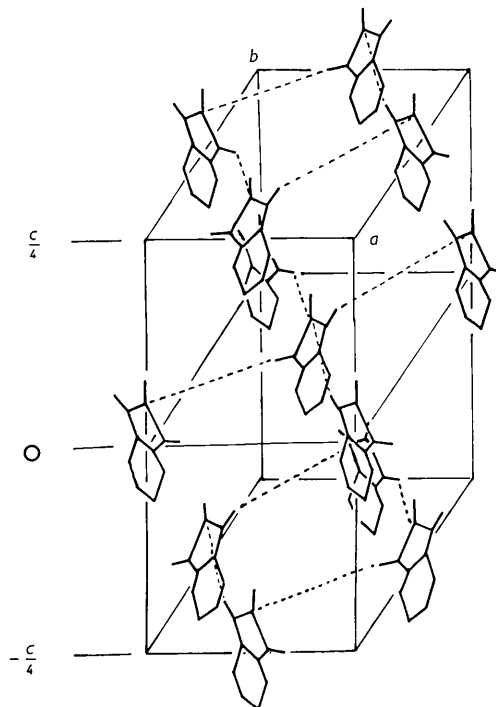


Fig. 3. An isometric drawing of the structure of triketoidane. The dotted lines show close C(1)...O(2) approaches. The molecules are not drawn to scale.

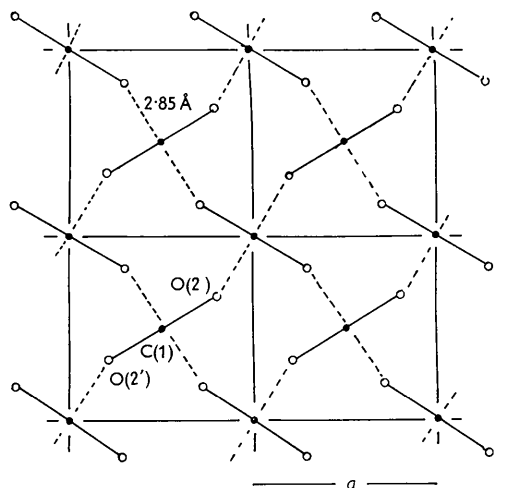


Fig. 4. A bounded projection of the structure of triketoidane of thickness $c/4$. The dotted lines show how the carbon-oxygen close approaches link a molecule to its four nearest neighbours at the same level of z . Only C(1) and O(2) are shown.

structural features with a common cause and that carbonyl carbon-oxygen interaction can in some cases (e.g. alloxan and triketoindane) be an important structural determinant.*

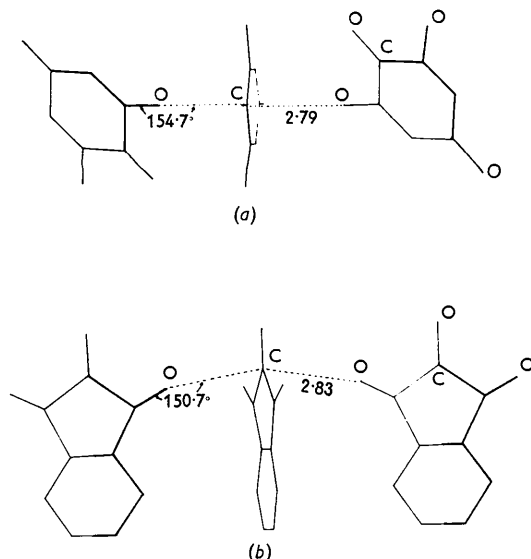


Fig. 5. The close $C \cdots O$ approaches in (a) alloxan and (b) triketoindane. In each case the molecules lie on a twofold rotation axis and the central atom of the triketo group is approached from opposite sides of the molecular plane by oxygen atoms in crystallographically equivalent positions.

This new example of a close $C \cdots O$ interaction can be explained (as can the other examples; Bolton, 1964) by assuming that because of the powerful inductive effect on C_β by the α and γ carbonyl groups

* This effect is discussed in detail elsewhere (Bolton, 1964b).

there are stronger than usual attractive forces between $C^{\delta+}=O^{\delta-}$ dipoles, and the charge centre $\beta C^{\delta+}$ in different molecules, which are able to bring carbonyl atoms closer together than London dispersion forces allow. On the basis of this simple description the $C=O \cdots C$ angle will be expected to approach towards 180° , as the attraction of a dipole is strongest along its axis. In this respect the observed value of 151° is in poorer agreement than the earlier examples and shows the weaknesses of this kind of qualitative explanation which ignores the effect of other intermolecular packing requirements. It does not, however, destroy the conclusion that the close $C \cdots O$ approaches are due to electrostatic attraction between carbon and oxygen atoms.

It might be mentioned in conclusion that Kihara (1963) has recently arrived at the correct structures for some molecular crystals by assuming that they are governed by electrostatic forces between molecules. If this is correct, then the close $C \cdots O$ approaches observed to date may be just rather stronger examples of a more widespread structure determining factor.

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