

# Potentiometric, Theoretical, and Thermodynamic Studies on Equilibrium Constants of Aurintricarboxylic Acid and Determination of Stability Constants of Its Complexes with $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ , $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ , $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ , $\text{Co}^{2+}$ , $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ , and $\text{Pb}^{2+}$ Metal Ions in Aqueous Solution

Hasan Atabey\* and Hayati Sari

Science and Arts Faculty, Chemistry Department, Gaziosmanpaşa University, 60250, Tokat, Turkey

**ABSTRACT:** In this study, the dissociation constants of aurintricarboxylic acid (5,5'-((3-carboxy-4-oxocyclohexa-2,5-dienylidene)methylene)bis(2-hydroxybenzoic acid)) (ATA) together with the stability constants of its  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ , and  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  complexes were studied potentiometrically/theoretically and determined via the SUPERQUAD computer program in aqueous media and at the ionic background of  $0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  of NaCl. Moreover, its thermodynamic parameters were determined in different temperatures (298 K, 308 K, and 318 K). It has been perceived that the ATA has five dissociation constants, so for  $\text{LH}_5$  they are 2.95 (3), 3.04 (4), 3.98 (3), 9.56 (1), and 10.06 (5), respectively. The overall stability constants of its metal complexes were calculated and various formed complexes formulated as  $\text{M}_2\text{L}$ ,  $\text{M}_2\text{HL}$ ,  $\text{M}_2\text{H}_2\text{L}$ ,  $\text{M}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$ , and  $\text{M}_2\text{H}_4\text{L}$  between the ATA with  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ , and  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  ions.

## INTRODUCTION

Aurintricarboxylic acid (5,5'-((3-carboxy-4-oxocyclohexa-2,5-dienylidene)methylene)bis(2-hydroxybenzoic acid)) (ATA) (Figure 1) is a very important compound because of its use in a wide number of fields. Actually, biological activity<sup>1–7</sup> and anti-HIV activity<sup>8–11</sup> of ATA were researched in many studies. ATA has been shown to inhibit the replication of viruses from several different families, including human immunodeficiency virus, vesicular stomatitis virus, and the coronavirus causing severe acute respiratory syndrome.<sup>12</sup> In addition, ATA has antiviral features against some viruses, such as SARS-CoV and other pathogenic positive-strand RNA viruses,<sup>13,14</sup> group-1 and group-2 influenza viruses,<sup>15</sup> and Enterovirus 71 (EV71).<sup>16</sup>

ATA has been used as an antiapoptotic drug to counteract ischemic or cytotoxic injury to neurons.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, ATA is well-known as an endonuclease inhibitor.<sup>18,19</sup>

Fluorescence spectra and fluorescence quantum yield of ATA were studied for the first time. It was found that ATA solutions with pH 3 similar to 12 produced fluorescence when irradiated with ultraviolet rays. The maximum excitation wavelength and the maximum emission wavelength are 297 nm and 409 nm, respectively.<sup>20</sup> Resonance light scattering (RLS) and absorption and fluorescence spectra of ATA were studied. In solutions with pH 3.7 to pH 11.0, the RLS signal was very weak but increased sharply with a decrease in pH when pH < 3.7 and reached a maximum at pH 2.7.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, many studies have been done related to ATA. However, its acid–base properties and complexation tendency have not been explained enough. The dissociation of ATA plays an important role in the complexation and its biological activity. Therefore, the accurate determination of dissociation and stability constant values is very important for explaining the antioxidant behavior of ATA and interaction with metal ions. Consequently, in the present study, dissociation constants of

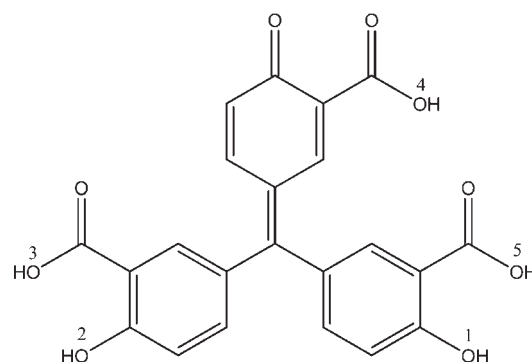


Figure 1. Chemical structure of ATA.

ATA and stability constants of its complexes with  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ , and  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  ions were determined using the potentiometric titration method which is accepted as a powerful and simple electroanalytical technique for determination of stability constants.<sup>22–24</sup> The potentiometric studies were carried out at the metal:ATA molar ratios of 2:1, and each titration was repeated in several series of independent measurements.

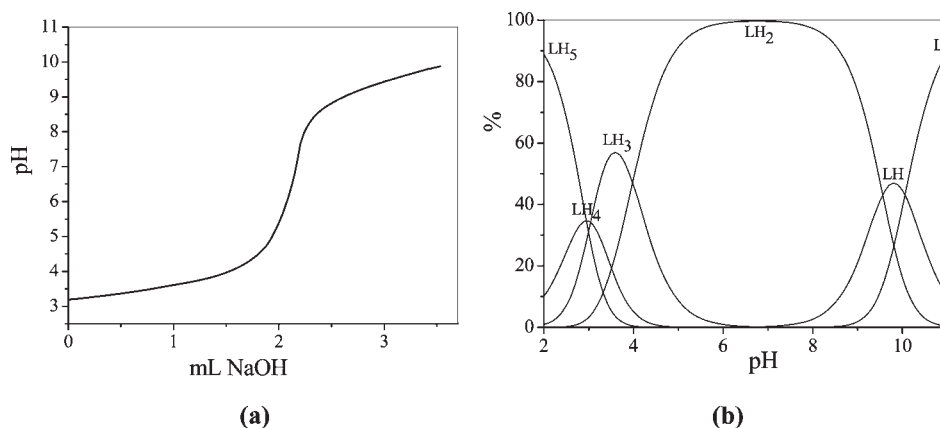
## EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

**Apparatus and Materials.** All the transition metal salts and NaCl used in this research were purchased from Merck, potassium hydrogen phthalate (KHP) from Fluka, and ATA (analytical grade),  $0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaOH, and  $0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  HCl as standard from Aldrich. All reagents were of analytical

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**Figure 2.** (a) Titration curve for ATA and (b) the species distribution curves of ATA (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl, 0.05 mmol of HCl).

quality and were used without further purification. Solutions of metals ions ( $2 \cdot 10^{-3} \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$ ) were prepared from  $\text{CuCl}_2$ ,  $\text{ZnCl}_2$ ,  $\text{NiCl}_2$ ,  $\text{CoCl}_2$ ,  $\text{HgCl}_2$ , and  $\text{PbCl}_2$  as received and standardized with ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA).<sup>25</sup>

Potassium hydrogen phthalate (0.05 M, KHP) was prepared for calibration of electrode systems. ATA ( $2 \cdot 10^{-3} \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$ ) in water,  $0.025 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaOH, and  $0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  HCl were prepared. NaOH concentration ( $0.025 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$ ) was standardized with primer standard KHP solution by pH-metric titration. The solutions were purged with nitrogen (99.9 %) through the cell solutions. NaCl stock solution ( $1.0 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$ ) was prepared.

For the solutions,  $\text{CO}_2$ -free double-distilled deionized water was obtained with an aquaMAX-Ultra water purification system (Young Lin Inst.). Its resistivity was  $18.2 \text{ M}\Omega \cdot \text{cm}^{-1}$ . pH-metric titrations were performed using the Molspin pH meter with an Orion 8102BNUWP ROSS ultra combination pH electrode. The temperature in the double-wall glass titration vessel was constantly controlled using a thermostat (DIGITERM 100, SELECTA). The cell solution was stirred during the titration at constant speed. The electrode was calibrated according to instructions of the Molspin Manual.<sup>26</sup> An automatic buret was connected to the Molspin pH-mV-meter. The pH electrode was calibrated with buffer solution (KHP) of pH 4.005, 4.018, and 4.038 at 298 K, 308 K, and 318 K, respectively.<sup>27</sup> The SUPERQUAD computer program was used for the calculation of both protonation and stability constants.<sup>28</sup>

**Potentiometric Measurements.** All potentiometric pH measurements were made on solutions in a 100 mL double-walled glass vessel using an Orion 8102BNUWP ROSS ultra combination pH electrode, and the temperature was controlled by circulating water through the double-walled glass vessel, from a constant-temperature bath (DIGITERM 100, SELECTA). The cell was equipped with a magnetic stirrer. Atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  was excluded from the titration cell with a purging steam of purified  $\text{N}_2$ . The system was maintained at an ionic strength of  $0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  by NaCl as a supporting electrolyte. In experiment, a solution containing about 0.01 mmol of ATA was placed in the cell. The required amounts of  $1.0 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl and  $0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  HCl were added. Finally, doubly distilled deionized water was added to the cell to a total volume of 50 mL, and titration was started. The pH data points were collected after each addition of  $0.03 \text{ cm}^3$  of the standardized NaOH solution. The second solution contains the same amounts of component plus about 0.02 mmol of each metal ion for the three times.

**Table 1. Dissociation Constants of ATA in the Study and Literature (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl, 0.05 mmol of HCl)**

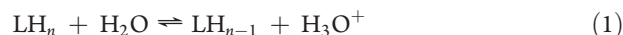
ligand	species	$\log_{10} \beta$	$\text{p}K_a$ (this work)	$\text{p}K_a$ (literature)
ATA	LH <sub>5</sub>	10.06 (2)	2.95 (2)	
	LH <sub>4</sub>	19.62 (1)	3.04 (4)	
	LH <sub>3</sub>	23.60 (2)	3.98 (3)	
	LH <sub>2</sub>	26.64 (4)	9.56 (1)	8.63 <sup>29</sup> to 8.93 <sup>30</sup>
	LH	29.59 (6)	10.06 (5)	8.85 <sup>29</sup> to 9.76 <sup>30</sup>

All titrations have been carried out between pH 3.0 and 11.0 and under a nitrogen atmosphere.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Dissociation Constants.** Dissociation constants were potentiometrically calculated from a series of several independent measurements. The titration curve and the species distribution curves for ATA in water with NaOH as a titrant are shown in Figure 2.

If  $\text{LH}_n$  ( $n = 5$ ) denotes the fully protonated form of the ATA, general notation of its protonation equilibria is as follows



In each stage, one proton dissociates, and dissociation constants ( $K_n$ ;  $n = 1-5$ ) are given as

$$K_n = \frac{[\text{LH}_{n-1}] \cdot [\text{H}_3\text{O}^+]}{[\text{LH}_n]} \quad (2)$$

Five  $\text{p}K_a$  values are obtained from this ligand: three of them are associated with the carboxyl oxygen atoms, and the other two are associated with hydroxyl groups. These  $\text{p}K_a$  values of ATA were calculated with very low standard deviation (Sigma value ( $\delta$ ): 0.70)<sup>28</sup> and determined as 2.95 (3), 3.04 (4), 3.98 (3), 9.56 (1), and 10.06 (5), respectively. A comparison the  $\text{p}K_a$  values of the ATA is given in Table 1.

According to Table 1, there are five acidic centers in ATA. These acidic centers are three carboxyl groups and two hydroxyl groups. In the literature, the stepwise protonation constants of the ligand and formation constants of the chelate have been determined using the Calvin–Bjerrum technique,<sup>30</sup> and two  $\text{p}K_a$  values (two hydroxyl groups) were reported because aurintricarboxylate salt was used as ligand and different ionic strength

**Table 2.** Calculated  $H_f$ , TE, and PA Values with the AM1 Method for ATA and Its Monoprotonated Forms

species	TE (kcal·mol <sup>-1</sup> )	$H_f$	PA
ATA	-135805.72	-200.16	-
1O-H <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-136031.36	-110.91	277.95
2O-H <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-136074.20	-97.13	264.17
3O-H <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-136014.98	-94.49	261.53
4O-H <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-136006.42	-85.97	253.01
5O-H <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-136015.81	-95.36	262.40

( $I = 0.02 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  by NaOCl) was used in the studies.<sup>29,30</sup> However, although ionic strength is different,  $pK_{a4}$  and  $pK_{a5}$  values were still shown similar to the literature.

All ligand species of ATA, which are expected to be formed under our experimental conditions, are presented in the distribution diagrams illustrated in Figure 2. The ligand species, which occurred in solution under our experimental conditions, are LH<sub>5</sub>, LH<sub>4</sub>, LH<sub>3</sub>, LH<sub>2</sub>, and LH. The experimental parameters and conditions used here are the same as those used to determine the stability constants. The distribution diagram of the ligand assists the determination of the experimental conditions where the coordination with metal ions would take place, especially in terms of pH.

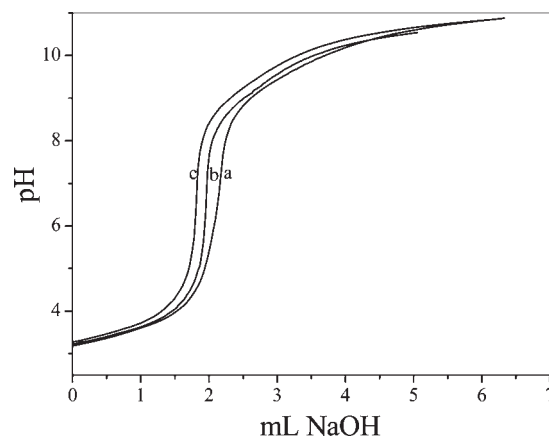
**Theoretical Calculation.** Semiempirical molecular orbital (SEMO) methods are one of the theoretical calculations that will assist in comprehending the protonation sequence of phenolate and carboxylate groups in the ligand molecule. The method is very useful for determination of the order of protonation in polyprotic coordination molecules.<sup>31–34</sup> The formation heats ( $H_f$ ) and the total energies (TE) of the ligands and monoprotated species were calculated by the Semi-Empirical AM1 method. In addition, the proton affinity (PA) of each oxygen atom in the ligands was found using formation heats in the following equation and given in Table 2.

$$PA = 367.2 + \Delta H_f^\circ(B) - \Delta H_f^\circ(BH^+) \quad (3)$$

where PA is the proton affinity of B types;  $\Delta H_f^\circ(B)$  is the formation heat of the B molecule;  $\Delta H_f^\circ(BH^+)$  is the formation heat of the BH<sup>+</sup> molecule; and 367.2 is the formation heat of H<sup>+</sup>.<sup>35</sup>

Proton affinity gives information about protonation order. Since the oxygen atom having the highest PA is 1O in ATA, the first protonated oxygen is 1O in this ligand. According to the calculated results (TE,  $H_f$ , and PA), protonation orders of oxygen atoms in the ATA are 1O, 2O, 5O, 3O, and 4O. The reason for 1O being the first protonated oxygen in the ATA is the inductive effect of the hydrogen bond with the carbonyl oxygen. In conclusion, according to the data obtained from theoretical calculation, 10.06 ( $pK_{a5}$ ), 9.56 ( $pK_{a4}$ ), 3.98 ( $pK_{a3}$ ), 3.04 ( $pK_{a2}$ ), and 2.95 ( $pK_{a1}$ ) values belong to 1O, 2O, 5O, 3O, and 4O in ATA, respectively.

As a result of theoretical and experimental calculations, ATA has three acidic carboxyl groups and two ionizable hydroxy groups, and the enhancement of carboxylic acidity is due to the inductive effect of the neighboring hydroxy group. This is essential in complying with the technical report of IUPAC<sup>36</sup> about the proton and metal ion stability constants of the *ortho*-hydroxy-carboxylic acid complexes. Clearly, due to intramolecular hydrogen bonding between the neighboring -OH and -COOH groups and the basic nature of the -OH group, the protonation of the phenolate group takes place at a very high pH

**Figure 3.** Titration curve for ATA in different temperatures: (a) 298 K, (b) 308 K, (c) 318 K ( $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl, 0.05 mmol of HCl).**Table 3.**  $pK_a$  Values of ATA in Different Temperatures (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl, 0.05 mmol of HCl)

Temperatures T/K					
298		308		318	
$\log_{10} \beta$	$pK_a$	$\log_{10} \beta$	$pK_a$	$\log_{10} \beta$	$pK_a$
10.06 (2)	2.95 (3)	10.31 (3)	2.83 (1)	10.49 (7)	2.78 (3)
19.62 (1)	3.04 (4)	19.64 (3)	3.24 (2)	19.73 (6)	3.25 (6)
23.60 (2)	3.98 (3)	23.28 (4)	3.64 (2)	23.35 (2)	3.62 (1)
26.64 (4)	9.56 (1)	26.51 (2)	9.33 (3)	25.59 (1)	9.24 (5)
29.59 (6)	10.06 (5)	29.34 (7)	10.31 (3)	29.37 (3)	10.49 (1)

level. Because of this *ortho*-effect, the protonation constant of the phenolate group of various aromatic *ortho*-hydroxycarboxylic acids is significantly higher than that of phenol, and the protonation constant of the carboxylate group is significantly smaller than that of benzoic acid.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, it can be assumed that the coordination of ATA with the metal ion occurs via the carboxylic group and the hydroxyl group to form complexes. Intra-hydrogen bonding between the hydrogen of the carboxylic group and the oxygen of the hydroxy group is expected to take place within the ligand molecule in the solution, but it is not expected that such bonding will cause significant obstruction to the coordination of the ligand to the metal ion.<sup>38</sup>

**Thermodynamic Study.** Titration curves for ATA in different temperatures and the dissociation constants of ATA have been evaluated at 298 K, 308 K, and 318 K and are given in Figure 3 and Table 3.

Figure 3 represents the titration curves for different temperatures (298 K, 308 K, and 318 K, respectively). Comparing the titration curves of the ATA (Figure 3) in different temperatures shows that lower pH in high temperature. This can simply be explained as a result of proton release from the ligand.<sup>38</sup> The amount of protons released depends on the strength of the intermolecular hydrogen bond. In other words, it can be said that when temperatures are increased the strength of the intermolecular hydrogen bonds is decreased.

The slope of the plot  $pK^H$  or  $\log_{10} K$  vs  $1/T$  was utilized to evaluate the enthalpy change  $\Delta H$  for the dissociation process,

**Table 4.** Thermodynamic Functions of ATA (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ NaCl}$ ,  $0.05 \text{ mmol}$  of HCl)

T/K	dissociation constants $\text{p}K_{a1}$ values	Gibbs energy	enthalpy	entropy
		$\text{kJ} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$ $\Delta G$	$\text{kJ} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$ $\Delta H$	$\text{J} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1} \cdot \text{K}^{-1}$ $\Delta S$
298	2.95	33.69		-336.24
308	2.83	32.74	-66.51	-327.57
318	2.78	32.77		-322.34
T/K	$\text{p}K_{a2}$ values	$\Delta G$	$\Delta H$	$\Delta S$
298	3.04	34.68		162.63
308	3.24	37.53	83.14	150.54
318	3.25	38.40		145.25
T/K	$\text{p}K_{a3}$ values	$\Delta G$	$\Delta H$	$\Delta S$
298	3.98	45.33		-598.51
308	3.64	42.31	-133.02	-578.67
318	3.62	42.76		-570.71
T/K	$\text{p}K_{a4}$ values	$\Delta G$	$\Delta H$	$\Delta S$
298	9.56	109.01		-784.28
308	9.33	108.32	-124.71	-769.06
318	9.24	108.82		-758.22
T/K	$\text{p}K_{a5}$ values	$\Delta G$	$\Delta H$	$\Delta S$
298	10.06	114.70		173.08
308	10.31	119.65	166.28	153.89
318	10.49	123.67		138.33

respectively. From the Gibbs energy change,  $\Delta G$  and  $\Delta H$  values can deduce the entropy changes  $\Delta S$  using the well-known relationships eq 4 and 5

$$\Delta G = -2.303RT \log_{10} K \quad (4)$$

$$\Delta S = (\Delta H - \Delta G)/T \quad (5)$$

All thermodynamic parameters of the dissociation process of ATA are recorded in Table 4.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the above results: the  $\text{p}K^{\text{H}}$  values decrease with increasing temperature (see  $\text{p}K_{a1}$ ,  $\text{p}K_{a3}$ , and  $\text{p}K_{a4}$ ), and the acidity of the ligands increases, independently of the nature of the substituent.<sup>39</sup> A positive value of  $\Delta H$  indicates that the process is endothermic (see  $\text{p}K_{a2}$  and  $\text{p}K_{a5}$ ). A large positive value of  $\Delta G$  indicates that the dissociation process is not spontaneous.<sup>40</sup>

This case can be shown between  $\text{p}K_{a1}$ ,  $\text{p}K_{a2}$ ,  $\text{p}K_{a3}$  values and  $\text{p}K_{a4}$ ,  $\text{p}K_{a5}$  values. The dissociation processes for LH, LH<sub>2</sub>, and LH<sub>3</sub> have negative values of  $\Delta S$  due to increased order as a result of the salvation processes.

**Stability Constants.** The ligand behaves as a tetradentate ligand, and the carboxyl and the *ortho*-hydroxy groups of the ligand coordinate to the metal ions. Diverse metal complexes were produced in the solution under the experimental conditions for each metal ion used. The species distribution curves of a variety of complexes formed in the solution were calculated and reviewed by the SUPERQUAD computer program.

The cumulative stability constants ( $\beta_{mlh}$ ) are defined by eqs 6 and 7.



$$\beta_{mlh} = \frac{[M_mL_lH_h]}{[M]^m[L]^l[H]^h} \quad (7)$$

where M is the Cu<sup>2+</sup> ion, L is ligand, and H is proton and  $m$ ,  $l$ , and  $h$  are the respective stoichiometric coefficients. Potentiometric titration of complex systems of respective metal ions including Cu<sup>2+</sup>, Ni<sup>2+</sup>, Zn<sup>2+</sup>, Co<sup>2+</sup>, Hg<sup>2+</sup>, and Pb<sup>2+</sup> with ATA in aqueous solution were carried out to evaluate the stoichiometry and stability of various species. The complexes formulated as M<sub>2</sub>L, M<sub>2</sub>LH, M<sub>2</sub>LH<sub>2</sub>, M<sub>2</sub>LH<sub>3</sub>, and M<sub>2</sub>LH<sub>4</sub> between the ATA and the Cu<sup>2+</sup>, Ni<sup>2+</sup>, Zn<sup>2+</sup>, Co<sup>2+</sup>, Hg<sup>2+</sup>, and Pb<sup>2+</sup> ions are depending on pH. In other words, the pH function regulates the subsistence of plausible species in solution.<sup>41</sup> Respectively, the obtained overall stability constants of these species are given in Table 5.

ATA occurs in three aromatic moieties. Two of these moieties are  $\alpha$ -hydroxycarboxylic acid systems. The hydroxycarboxylic acids contain two donor groups, the hydroxyl and the carboxylate groups (bidentate), and therefore they are all potentially tetradentate ligands.

Another moiety is  $\alpha$ -oxo-carboxylic acid, which contains only one donor group, carboxylate (monodentate), and therefore it cannot attempt complexation with metal ions. So, chemical structures for M<sub>2</sub>-ATA<sup>42</sup> complex systems can be given as in Figure 4.

Generally, the complexes which have been traced in solution are M<sub>2</sub>L, M<sub>2</sub>LH, M<sub>2</sub>LH<sub>2</sub>, M<sub>2</sub>LH<sub>3</sub>, and M<sub>2</sub>LH<sub>4</sub>, where LH<sub>5</sub> represents the neutral ligand; other species with H less than 5 are the deprotonated species of the (ATA) ligand; and M represents one of the following metal ions Cu<sup>2+</sup>, Ni<sup>2+</sup>, Zn<sup>2+</sup>, Co<sup>2+</sup>, Hg<sup>2+</sup>, and Pb<sup>2+</sup>, bearing in mind that not all the metal ions are capable of forming all the above complex species.

The species distribution diagrams of the Cu<sup>2+</sup>-ATA system are shown in Figure 5. Cu<sub>2</sub>L-Cu<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>L complexes were obtained in the solution under experimental conditions between pH 3 and 11. At about the pH of 3, approximately 95 % of the total Cu<sup>2+</sup> turns to Cu<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>L, forming the main constituent of the complex species. Cu<sub>2</sub>H<sub>3</sub>L formed about 75 % of the total Cu<sup>2+</sup>, which revealed its maximum occurrence at a pH of about 5. The maximum occurrence of Cu<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>L (about 85 %) was at a pH of about 7, while the maximum occurrence of Cu<sub>2</sub>HL (about 60 %) was at a pH of about 9. In more basic solution and at a pH just above 9, another species Cu<sub>2</sub>L starts to develop and reaches its maximum occurrence in the solution, at a pH of about 11 (forming nearly 98 % of the total Cu<sup>2+</sup>).

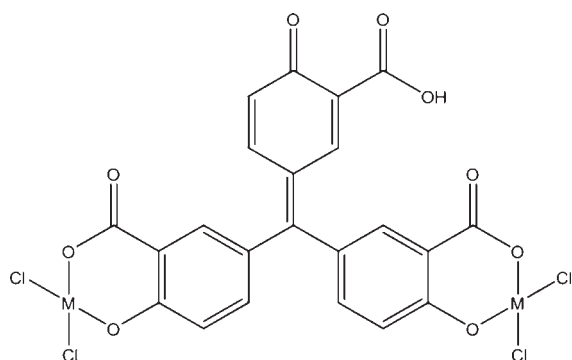
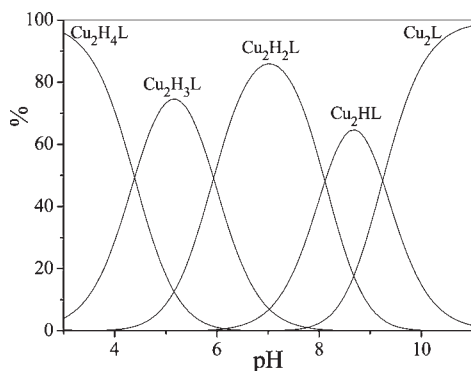
In the Ni<sup>2+</sup>-ATA system (see Figure 6), Ni<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>L-Ni<sub>2</sub>L complexes were obtained in the solution between pH 3 and 11. Three main complexes were seen in the Ni<sup>2+</sup>-ATA system according to Figure 7. While two of these complexes formed (Ni<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>L-Ni<sub>2</sub>H<sub>3</sub>L) take place in the acidic region, the Ni<sub>2</sub>L complex formed takes place in the basic region (nearly 98 % of the total Ni<sup>2+</sup> at pH 11). Ni<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>L formed about 55 % of the total Ni<sup>2+</sup>, which revealed its maximum occurrence at a pH of about 8.3, while the maximum occurrence of Ni<sub>2</sub>HL (less than about 40 %) was at a pH of about 9.

Figure 7 demonstrates the species distribution diagrams for the Zn<sup>2+</sup>-ATA system. Species start to exist at even lower pH values than Ni<sup>2+</sup> and Cu<sup>2+</sup> complexes. According to Figure 7,



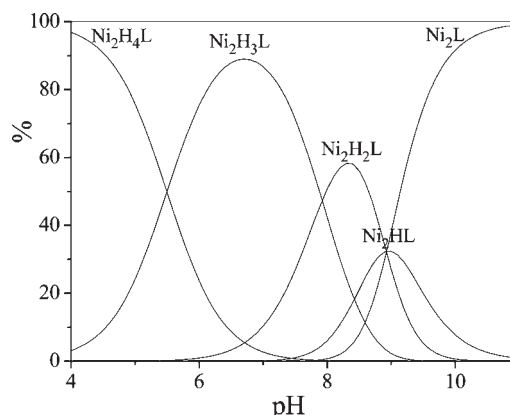
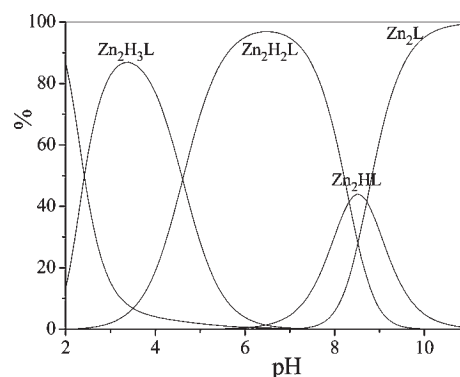
Table 5. Overall Stability Constants in the  $M^{2+}$ –ATA System (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ NaCl}$ , 0.05 mmol of HCl)

species	$\text{Cu}^{2+}$	$\text{Ni}^{2+}$	$\text{Zn}^{2+}$	$\text{Co}^{2+}$	$\text{Hg}^{2+}$	$\text{Pb}^{2+}$
<i>mhl</i>	$\log_{10} \beta$					
201	20.56 (3)	19.56 (6)	19.59 (9)	20.56 (4)	20.56 (6)	20.71 (5)
211	29.81 (3)	28.49 (6)	28.31 (4)	29.56 (8)	29.56 (6)	29.29 (5)
221	37.92 (3)	37.41 (4)	36.63 (2)	38.61 (5)	38.61 (4)	38.44 (4)
231	43.86 (4)	45.34 (6)	41.24 (5)	46.65 (3)	46.65 (3)	45.71 (3)
241	48.24 (5)	50.83 (6)	-	51.79 (4)	51.79 (2)	50.55 (6)

Figure 4. Chemical structures for  $M_2$ –ATA complex systems.Figure 5. Species distribution curves for ATA with  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  complexes (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ NaCl}$ , 0.05 mmol of HCl).

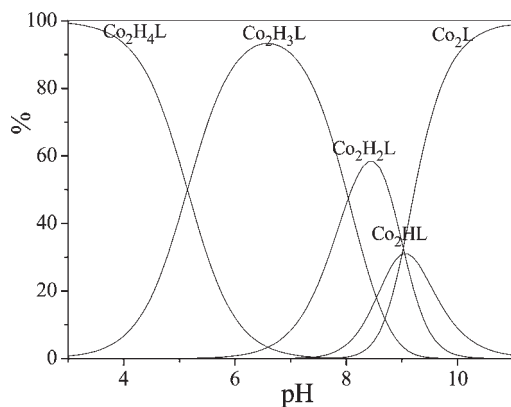
three main complexes were obtained in the  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ –ATA system. One of the species ( $\text{Zn}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$ ) existed in the acidic region (about pH 3.5), while  $\text{Zn}_2\text{H}_2\text{L}$  formed about 95 % of the total  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$  and took place in the neutral region (about pH 7) and  $\text{Zn}_2\text{L}$  formed about 99 % of the total  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ , which revealed its maximum occurrence at a pH of about 11. Another species ( $\text{Zn}_2\text{HL}$ ) started to occur at pH 6.5 and reached the maximum at pH 8.5, less than 50 % of the total  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ .

Species distribution curves for  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ –ATA systems are shown in Figure 8.  $\text{Co}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$ – $\text{Co}_2\text{L}$  complexes were obtained between pH 3 and 11. The  $\text{Co}^{2+}$  ion is capable of forming all the possible species which might be expected as a result of coordination and dissociation processes between the ATA ligand and metal ion. Three main complexes ( $\text{Co}_2\text{H}_4\text{L}$ ,  $\text{Co}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$ ,  $\text{Co}_2\text{L}$ ) were obtained in solution under the experimental conditions.  $\text{Co}_2\text{H}_4\text{L}$ ,  $\text{Co}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$ , and  $\text{Co}_2\text{L}$  complexes take place in the acidic, neutral, and basic region and at about pH 3, pH 7, and pH 11 and

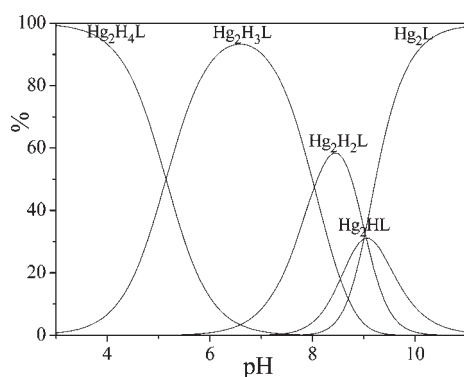
Figure 6. Species distribution curves for ATA with  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  complexes (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ NaCl}$ , 0.05 mmol of HCl).Figure 7. Species distribution curves for ATA with  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$  complexes (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \text{ NaCl}$ , 0.05 mmol of HCl).

relatively 99 %, 95 %, and 98 % of the total  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$  solution, respectively.

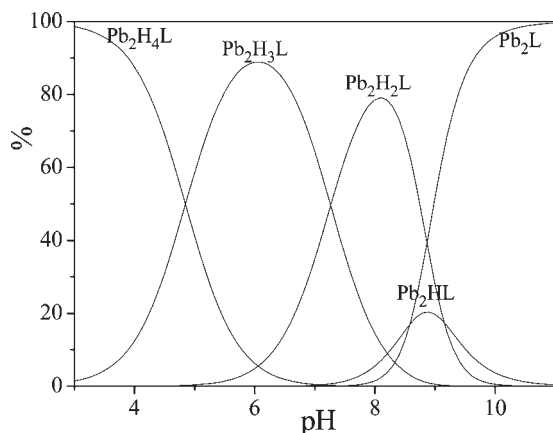
The  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ –ATA complex was considered in this study to reveal the extent of the coordination properties against toxic heavy metals (Hg, Pb) of the (ATA) ligand. A variety of species started to appear in the solution at a pH of 3. The  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ –ATA system (see Figure 9) is quite similar to  $\text{Co}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  complexes. Similarity, three main complexes ( $\text{Hg}_2\text{H}_4\text{L}$ ,  $\text{Hg}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$ ,  $\text{Hg}_2\text{L}$ ) exist around the acidic, neutral, and basic region, respectively. The  $\text{Hg}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$  and  $\text{Hg}_2\text{H}_2\text{L}$  species were formed in the acidic and neutral medium, and their formation span between pH just above 3 and pH just above 6 with a maximum availability of about 100 % at pH 3 for the first and of the same percentage with a pH of 7 for the second. The other species  $\text{Hg}_2\text{L}$  formed in pH 11, and its maximum availability of 99 % was in the basic area.



**Figure 8.** Species distribution curves for ATA with  $\text{Co}^{2+}$  complexes (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl, 0.05 mmol of HCl).



**Figure 9.** Species distribution curves for ATA with  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$  complexes (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl, 0.05 mmol of HCl).



**Figure 10.** Species distribution curves for ATA with  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  complexes (298 K,  $I = 0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  NaCl, 0.05 mmol of HCl).

$\text{Pb}^{2+}$ –ATA complexes exist in solution at different shapes as in the case of the previous metal complexes. According to Figure 10,  $\text{Pb}_2\text{L}$ – $\text{Pb}_2\text{H}_4\text{L}$  complexes were obtained in the solution under experimental conditions between pH 3 and 11. At about the pH of 3, approximately 99 % of the total  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  turns to  $\text{Pb}_2\text{H}_4\text{L}$ , forming the main constituent of the complex species.

$\text{Pb}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$  formed about 90 % of the total  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$ , which revealed its maximum occurrence at a pH of about 6. The maximum

occurrence of  $\text{Pb}_2\text{H}_2\text{L}$  (about 80 %) was at a pH of about 8, while the maximum occurrence of  $\text{Pb}_2\text{HL}$  (about 20 %) was at a pH of about 9. In more basic solution and at a pH just above 10, another species  $\text{Pb}_2\text{L}$  started to develop and reached its maximum occurrence in the solution, at a pH of about 11 at relatively 98 % of the total  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$ .

As result of that mentioned above, ATA contains hydroxyl and carboxyl groups, which are ortho position to each other, and included four donor oxygen atoms which providd the coordination according to  $\text{M}_2\text{L}$  form. Complexation starts when carboxyl and hydroxyl groups that participate in the coordination are dissociated. First, carboxyl groups ionize and then hydroxyl groups. Our results show that, when both of the hydroxyl groups are ionized, the ligand (ATA) behaves as a tetradentate ligand, and the  $\text{M}_2\text{L}$  complex form occurs. Therefore, the highest ratio of the total  $\text{M}^{2+}$  turns into  $\text{M}_2\text{L}$  in all metal complexes in our experimental conditions. When one of the hydroxyl groups is ionized, the ligand (ATA) behaves as a tridentate ligand, and the  $\text{M}_2\text{L}$  complex does not happen. Therefore, the lowest ratio of the total  $\text{M}^{2+}$  turns into  $\text{M}_2\text{HL}$  in all metal complexes.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the dissociation constants of aurintricarboxylic acid (5,5'-(3-carboxy-4-oxocyclohexa-2,5-dienylidene)methylene)-bis(2-hydroxybenzoic acid)) (ATA) together with the stability constants of its  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ , and  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  complexes were studied potentiometrically/theoretically and determined via the SUPERQUAD computer program in aqueous media and at the ionic background of  $0.1 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  of NaCl. Moreover, its thermodynamic parameters were determined in different temperatures (298 K, 308 K, and 318 K). Dissociation constants of ATA were determined as  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}1} = 2.95$  (3),  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}2} = 3.04$  (4),  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}3} = 3.98$  (3),  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}4} = 9.56$  (1), and  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}5} = 10.06$  (5). The overall stability constants of its metal complexes were calculated through computer refinement of the pH–volume data, and the results are presented Tables 1 to 5. Various formed complexes were formulated as  $\text{M}_2\text{L}$ ,  $\text{M}_2\text{HL}$ ,  $\text{M}_2\text{H}_2\text{L}$ ,  $\text{M}_2\text{H}_3\text{L}$ , and  $\text{M}_2\text{H}_4\text{L}$  between the ATA with  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$ , and  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  ions.

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

### Corresponding Author

\*E-mail: hasatabey@gmail.com.

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