

Production of oxygen by electronically induced dissociations in ice

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A solid-state chemical model is given for the production of O₂ by electronic excitation of ice, a process that occurs on icy bodies in the outer solar system. Based on a review of the relevant available laboratory data, we propose that a trapped oxygen atom-water complex is the principal precursor for the formation of molecular oxygen in low-temperature ice at low fluences. Oxygen formation then occurs through direct excitation of this complex or by its reaction with a freshly produced, nonthermal O from an another excitation event. We describe a model for the latter process that includes competition with precursor destruction and the effect of sample structure. This allows us to put the ultraviolet photon, low-energy electron, and fast-ion experiments on a common footing for the first time. The formation of the trapped oxygen atom precursor is favored by the preferential loss of molecular hydrogen and is quenched by reactions with mobile H. The presence of impurity scavengers can limit the trapping of O, leading to the formation of oxygen-rich molecules in ice. Rate equations that include these reactions are given and integrated to obtain an analytic approximation for describing the experimental results on the production and loss of molecular oxygen from ice samples. In the proposed model, the loss rate varies, roughly, inversely with solid-state defect density at low temperatures, leading to a yield that increases with increasing temperature as observed. Cross sections obtained from fits of the model to laboratory data are evaluated in light of the proposed solid-state chemistry. © 2005 American Institute of Physics.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Oxygen has been detected in the very thin atmospheres on the icy moons of Jupiter, and peroxide and oxygen-rich molecules have been observed as trapped species in their icy surfaces. The observed O₂ is primarily a product of the decomposition of ice by energetic ions and electrons trapped in the Jovian magnetosphere.¹⁻⁴ More recently molecular oxygen ions have been detected over the rings of Saturn suggestive of an oxygen ring atmosphere produced by ultraviolet (UV) photon-induced production of O₂ in ice.⁵ In addition, molecular oxygen, hydrogen peroxide, and oxidized sulfur and carbon have all been detected as trapped species in the icy satellite surfaces.^{4,6} At the icy moon Europa, the proposed transport of these oxygen-rich species to its putative subsurface ocean as a means of sustaining aerobic life processes⁷ has excited the astrophysical community. This has also motivated us to describe the solid-state chemistry that follows the production of electronic excitations in ice.

In this paper, we summarize the laboratory database for

radiation-induced production of O₂ from ice. We then use these results as a guide in describing the physical and chemical processes leading to the formation of molecular oxygen by energetic charged particles (e.g., ions), electrons, and ultraviolet (UV) photons incident on an ice sample. Our goal is to characterize the primary physical and chemical pathways for the nonthermal production of oxygen in low-temperature ice. Quite remarkably, a quantitative model for this was not available in spite of laboratory studies that have been carried out since the 1950s. Thus, we give a model for the chemical pathways at low doses that differs from those models typically suggested to be dominant in water. We show that the model is consistent with available data and suggest critical experimental tests.

Following a brief review of the space observations, we summarize the principal results of the considerable laboratory data on the radiolysis and photolysis of ice in order to motivate the model. We then describe the generalized rate equations for a chemical kinetic model for production of molecular oxygen in ice. In this model, trapping at defects and percolation from depth play important roles. These equations are then integrated over the depth of penetration of the

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radiation and simplified to obtain an approximate analytic expression for the yield of molecular oxygen from ice that can be tested experimentally. This expression also reduces to the precursor model of Sieger *et al.*² and Orlando and Sieger.³ Fits of the model to the available data are used to extract primary dissociation and reaction cross sections and to show the commonality of the results for photon, electron, and fast-ion-induced chemistry. We also show that hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) or the superoxide (HO_2) are not necessary precursors for oxygen production from a fresh ice sample, although they likely become important at higher doses and on annealing of the irradiated samples.⁸

II. SUMMARY OF SPACE OBSERVATIONS AND LABORATORY STUDIES

Gas-phase oxygen has been observed to be associated with the icy bodies in the Jovian and Saturnian systems as discussed.⁴ In addition, two well-known transitions for interacting pairs of O_2 molecules at 577.2 and 627.5 nm were observed in the reflectance spectra of Jupiter's moons Ganymede⁹ and Europa.¹⁰ These bands are associated with the O_2 dimer,¹¹ suggesting that molecular oxygen is locally dense, likely as an inclusion in the icy surface.^{9,12} Finally, the Hartley band of O_3 has been tentatively identified in the UV absorption spectra of certain icy satellites.¹³ Although the band shape suggests that additional absorbing species are present,¹⁴ O_3 trapped within the icy surface is consistent with the presence of trapped oxygen inclusions exposed to radiation.^{1,12} This feature is superimposed on a broad UV absorption extending from about $0.4 \mu\text{m}$ to shorter wavelengths and attributed to another radiolytically produced oxidant, H_2O_2 , which was also identified in the infrared (IR).¹⁵ Consistent with the above, oxygen-rich molecules appear to be produced by the radiation processing of ice containing sulfur (SO_2 and a sulfate) and carbon (CO_2 and a carbonate).⁶ Below we summarize the laboratory data bases showing a few of the principal results.

Although impurities are known to affect luminescence in ice,¹⁶ the production of O_2 by *photolysis* was inferred via luminescence from thick samples of ice formed from purified water.¹⁷ In most other studies, the radiation-induced production of O_2 from ice is detected in the gas phase by a quadrupole mass spectrometer (QMS) either after warming or during irradiation as an outgassed species. In the latter experiments, the production efficiency is given as a yield, the number of O_2 produced during irradiation of the sample per electron, ion, or photon incident. This is a quantity we will calculate below. In such studies, the O_2 that remains trapped in the ice is typically not measured.

Though some early radiolysis experiments were likely affected by impurities, the ion- and electron-beam results presented in this paper were carried out in ultrahigh vacuum (UHV) with very pure ice samples. Though the techniques have been described in detail, we present a brief description of the most relevant facts concerning the low-energy electron experiments.^{2,3} Briefly, an UHV chamber (base pressure of 1×10^{-10} Torr) was equipped with a pulsed low-energy (5–250 eV) electron gun, a cryogenically cooled sample

holder, and a QMS. The electron beam has a maximum time-averaged current density of $\sim 10^{14}$ electrons/ $\text{cm}^2 \text{ s}$ and a typical beam spot size of ~ 1.5 mm. The maximum total dose used in the experiments reported here is $\sim 10^{15}$ electrons/ cm^2 which was achieved using pulsed irradiation over a 100 s interval. The typical pulse width was 100 μs and the frequency used was 1000 Hz. The current density per pulse never exceeded $\sim 10^{10}$ electrons/ cm^2 pulse. This is an effective impingement rate of one low-energy electron per 10^5 surface molecules. Even after limited phonon excitation and secondary scattering, the subsequent heating of the surface during our pulsed electron-beam dosing condition is negligible. Since there is a secondary-emission yield from ice and holes at the surface are not all neutralized by recombination,¹⁸ measurable surface charging occurs rapidly.¹⁹ A quasisteady state is reached at doses as low as $\sim 10^{13}$ electrons/ cm^2 , and then the surface charge changes very slowly. Therefore, charging cannot account for the principal fluence dependence observed for the O_2 yield.

Ice thin films were grown after several freeze-pump-thaw cycles by controlled vapor deposition on either Pt(111) or graphite substrates. Note that oxygen was never observed/present in the absence of radiation. The substrates were heated resistively which allowed for temperature control from 80 to 500 K. The substrate temperature was monitored with a thermocouple and a computer-controlled feedback system drove the temperature ramp at a rate of 8 K/min. Porous amorphous solid water (PASW) samples were deposited at 80 K with a directional doser oriented approximately 70° from normal incidence. Nonporous amorphous solid water (ASW) samples were dosed between 110–120 K at normal incidence and crystalline ice (CI) samples were deposited between 150 and 155 K. Film thickness is estimated to be between 50–100 ML by comparison to published temperature-programmed desorption data.

The principal dissociation processes in ice lead to H, OH, H_2 , and O, but the principal species that escape from an irradiated ice sample are those that have the lowest binding energies to ice: H_2 , O_2 , and H_2O . That is, surface binding and reactive pathways act as filters for the ejecta. Therefore, gas-phase O_2 coming from an irradiated sample in a vacuum can be readily detected although decomposition of bulk ice is inefficient.

At low doses the O_2 yield was found to increase linearly with dose until saturation occurs. This dependence has been seen in a number of experiments and is shown in Figs. 1(a) and 1(b) for a fast heavy ion and low-energy electrons. These yields have also been shown to be temperature dependent by a number of laboratories using several types of incident radiation. As an example, this is shown at saturation for incident 1.5 MeV Ne^+ and low-energy electrons in Figs. 2(a) and 2(b). For temperatures $< \sim 140$ K, the yield of O_2 and D_2 produced from vapor-deposited ice samples at low radiation doses decreases with decreasing temperature. It has been shown repeatedly, over most of the temperature range studied, that the measured yields depend on the total dose and not the dose rate, although this has *not* been tested at the higher temperatures shown in Figs. 1 and 2. Also seen in Fig. 2(b) is a clear drop in the yield for temperatures above

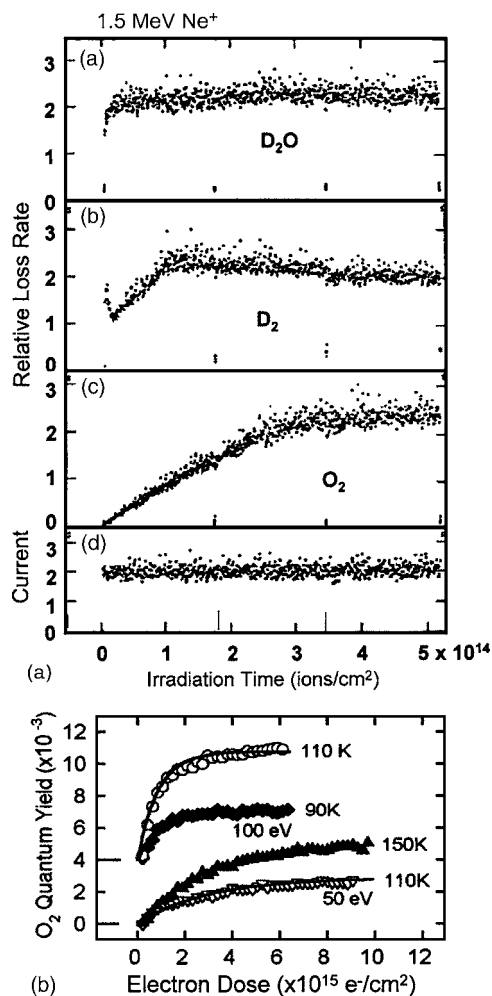


FIG. 1. (a) Relative yields vs fluence (ion flux \times time) for 1.5 MeV Ne⁺ incident on D₂O ice at 7 K (adapted from Reimann *et al.* 1984) (Ref. 21). Top panel: D₂O yield. Middle panel: D₂ yield. Bottom panel: O₂ yields. Yields at other temperatures exhibited similar dependences with the slope of O₂ yield vs fluence varying with T . Fit to the O₂ yield gives parameters in Table I and fits to temperature dependence give activation energies between ~ 0.02 eV at the lowest fluences and lowest T to ~ 0.07 eV at the highest T and highest fluences. (b) Yield of O₂ vs fluence of low-energy electrons on D₂O ice for two electron energies and a number of temperatures (from Sieger *et al.*, 1998) (Ref. 2). The lines through the data are the fits using Eq. (4a) in this text. The fits were used to extract the parameters for low-energy electrons given in Table I.

150 K. This drop has been shown to be related to the amorphous to cubic phase transition which is manifested by the small shoulder on the leading edge of the thermal desorption yield (solid line with no symbols) of molecular water.³ There is also a shoulder prominent in the D₂ yield at 170 K that is due to reactive scattering in the gas phase.

The O₂ yields have also been shown to depend on the sample formation temperature and crystal state,³ indicating that structure and defects can affect the O₂ yield. An O₂ production “threshold” of ~ 5.3 eV was suggested by the photolysis experiments of Mattich *et al.*¹⁷ In the UHV experiments a threshold of ~ 6.5 eV (cross section $\sim 10^{-20}$ cm²) was found using low-energy electrons^{2,3} with a similar threshold for O (³P, ¹D) and H₂ productions.²⁰ As seen in Fig. 1(a), D₂ is promptly ejected from D₂O ice whereas O₂ is not. However, after an incubation dose, the O₂

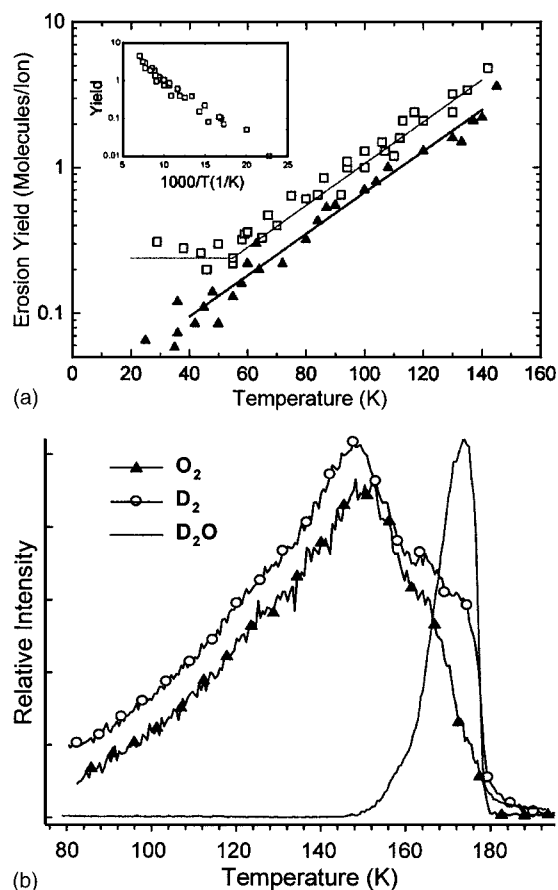


FIG. 2. (a) Yield for D₂ and O₂ at saturation (steady state) from 1.5 MeV He⁺ on D₂O ice vs the temperature of the ice (adapted from Brown *et al.*, 1982) (Ref. 39). Inset: D₂ yield minus the constant yield at low T vs $1/kT$, giving an activation energy of ~ 0.03 eV. (b) Yield for O₂ and D₂ vs temperature for incident electrons at saturation (steady state), showing the correlation between the production of D₂ and O₂ in steady state. Also shown is the sublimation of the D₂O sample that occurs at the higher temperatures. Note the amorphous to cubic phase transition occurs between 145 and 160 K.

yield and D₂ yields in steady state are correlated,^{21,22} as indicated in Figs. 2(a) and 2(b). In this way the stoichiometry of the surface layer is only slightly altered.²³

The temperature dependencies for the yield of O₂ from ice have been repeatedly interpreted in terms of effective activation energies. At temperatures ~ 40 – 120 K, these were found to be relatively small (~ 0.03 eV) [Fig. 2(a)]. Such energies are equivalent in size to activation energies for mobility of protons or hydrogen in ice and for structural rearrangements. Finally, for thin samples and penetrating radiation, percolation of oxygen from depth can occur so that the yields are found to depend on the sample thickness. Since the measured yields were also shown to depend on the excitation density, sample formation, and temperature, comparisons between experiments have proven to be difficult.

Hydrogen peroxide and related species formed by incident radiation are not readily ejected into the gas phase, but can be detected via absorption bands as trapped species in an irradiated ice sample.^{24–26} Hydrogen peroxide forms via the principal dissociation product, OH, and the production yields correlate with H₂ formation.⁴ Hydrogen peroxide and/or HO₂ have been suggested² as potential precursor species for the

formation of O₂. However, the fluence dependence observed in the QMS experiments suggests that O₂ can be formed by a process that does not involve these species, as describe below. In addition, recent matrix isolation studies indicate that trapped O can be converted to hydrogen peroxide and hydrogen peroxide converted into trapped O by incident radiation (i.e., H₂O–O+hν→H₂O₂; H₂O₂+hν→H₂O–O).²⁷ In the model below, trapped O is the principal species considered for formation of O₂ at low doses. At higher doses, the conversion of hydrogen peroxide to trapped O can provide additional channels for O₂ formation that may involve^{8,28} pairs of H₂O₂ or HO₂. Although on a planetary surface the high-dose results may be more relevant, here we are primarily interested in the new channel occurring at relatively low doses in order to interpret a number of recent laboratory results. Below we construct a chemical kinetic model of the production of O₂ and then use this model to interpret a number of experiments.

III. MODEL FOR FORMATION OF O₂

The yield of O₂ from ice at low temperature increases linearly with radiation fluence (flux×time or dose) at the low fluences as indicated in Fig. 1 and is independent of beam flux. Quite remarkably, this is the case both for low-energy electrons that make a single excitation for each impact and fast ions that make a density of excitations along their path through the solid. At low temperatures, if the beam is turned off and later turned back on, the measured yield returns to the value it had before the beam was turned off indicating that a stable chemical alteration occurred.^{2,21} Therefore, either the ice is chemically altered before the incident radiation produces O₂, or O₂ is produced and trapped in the solid and then caused to escape by the subsequent radiation. Whereas the former is the case for the low-energy electrons, both processes occur for penetrating radiation.⁴ It is the preferential loss of hydrogen [e.g., Fig. 1(a)] from an irradiated ice that enhances the likelihood of forming oxygen-rich precursors and the subsequent production of molecular oxygen.^{1,4} Therefore, we consider the chemical precursors and the production of O₂ during the irradiation of ice.

The analytic model used by Seiger *et al.*² to fit their electron data is first reviewed. This is followed by the more detailed chemical kinetic model for the radiation processing of ice at the low fluences shown in Fig. 1. This model is then used to obtain cross sections from the available laboratory data.

A. Analytic precursor model

In describing their electron irradiation experiments, Seiger *et al.*² separated the temperature-dependent precursor formation step from the temperature-independent O₂ production step. The column density of a precursor species N_p formed in ice by incident radiation was calculated using cross sections for production σ_p and destruction σ of the precursor. O₂ is then formed by direct or indirect electronic excitation of this precursor described by the cross section

σ_{O_2} . The model is described by a pair of simple rate equations, one for N_p and one for the production rate of oxygen dN_{O_2}/dt ,

$$dN_p/dt = \sigma_p \phi N - \sigma \phi N_p, \quad (1)$$

$$dN_{O_2}/dt = \sigma_{O_2} \phi N_p. \quad (2)$$

Here ϕ is the radiation flux and N is the column density of H₂O from which the incident radiation can produce and eject O₂. For low-energy electrons, N is a few monolayers ($\sim 3 \times 10^{15}$ H₂O/cm²) but N is much larger for energetic ions. Here we write the destruction cross section as $\sigma = \sigma'_p + \sigma_{O_2}$ where σ'_p accounts for precursor destruction processes other than the formation of O₂.

Solving Eq. (1) assuming N is nearly constant, the fraction of precursors c_p in the penetrated column after time t is

$$c_p = N_p/N = [\sigma_p/\sigma][1 - \exp(-\sigma\Phi)]. \quad (3)$$

Here $\Phi = [\phi t]$ is the fluence (flux×time), the number of particles (photons, electrons, or ions) incident on the surface per unit area. Using c_p in Eq. (2), the O₂ yield Y at any fluence can be written in terms of the yield at steady state, Y_∞ ,

$$Y = [dN_{O_2}/dt]/\phi = \sigma_{O_2} c_p N = Y_\infty [1 - \exp(-\sigma\Phi)], \quad (4a)$$

$$Y_\infty = [\sigma_p \sigma_{O_2} / \sigma] N. \quad (4b)$$

Accounting for the destruction of water molecules in the initial column, N , changes the result in Eq. (4) only slightly. Photolysis experiments suggest that the number of dissociated water molecules in steady state is $\sim 10\%$ of the irradiated column.²⁹

The form in Eq. (4a) gave excellent fits to the incident electron data,² as seen in Fig. 1(b). In order to extract *both* σ_p and σ_{O_2} from these fits to the yield versus fluence data, it was also assumed that the production of O₂ is the principal precursor destruction process, i.e., $\sigma \approx \sigma_{O_2}$ and $\sigma'_p = 0$. However, other precursor destruction processes can dominate σ , especially for penetrating radiation, as discussed below.

In the above model the precursor is formed in a single excitation event in a fresh ice sample. For low-energy ionizing radiation, hydrogen peroxide, a suggested precursor, is formed as a product of two dissociation events in ice,²⁵ i.e., $2H_2O \rightarrow 2H + 2OH \rightarrow H_2 + H_2O_2$. If it were the principal precursor, the form for the yield in Eq. (4a) could be roughly recovered. However, there would be an offset due to the two-step precursor formation process, i.e., $Y \approx Y_\infty [1 - \exp(-\sigma\Phi) - \Delta]$, where Δ is determined by the peroxide formation and destruction processes.⁴ This would also be the case if our proposed precursor was formed in any other process that required two excitation events, such as $H_2O \rightarrow H + OH \rightarrow H + H + O$. Since no obvious offset at low fluences was observed, we consider a precursor formed by a single energy absorption event.

B. Trap density and trapped O

In Eqs. (1) and (2), the density of trapping sites n_t is not explicitly included. However, trapping sites and porosity have been shown to be important for ice chemistry.^{17,22,30}

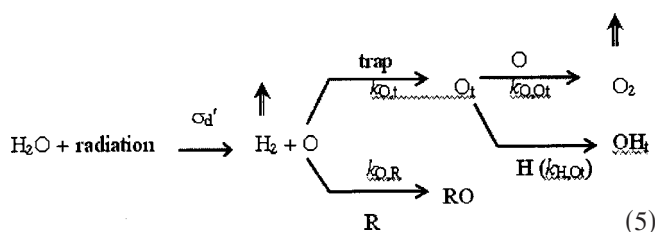
Although the density of defects, voids, and interfaces *decrease* as the formation temperature of the ice increases, the efficiency of production of O₂ is the opposite, increasing with increasing T for $T < \sim 140$ K.

We propose that trapped oxygen atoms are the principal precursor at low fluences. O₂ is then formed by the reaction of O (or OH) with this precursor or by electronic excitation of the precursor complex. Here we describe the kinetics of the production of O₂ by O-atom reactive scattering. This is similar to the production of CO₂ in a CO/H₂O ice mixture.³¹ A paper describing the role of direct and indirect electronic excitations of the precursor is the subject of a separate paper.²²

Following dissociation to H₂+O, which is given by the absorption cross section σ'_d , H₂ is lost from the ice samples at the temperatures above ~ 40 K. The O produced by ions or electrons can be in the ground-state or in the excited singlet and triplet states. However, the UV absorption below the band gap can only produce excited singlet states. These can quench in the ice matrix releasing energy but eventually trap. The newly formed O produces an oxygen-water molecule complex, O $\cdot\cdot$ (H₂O)_n, which we refer to in the following as trapped O, O_t. This occurs according to the reaction rate $k_{O,t}$, and we propose this as a precursor to the formation of O₂. This precursor might produce O₂ on excitation,²² but here we suggest that a subsequent radiation absorption can again produce a nonthermal O via H₂+O (σ'_d). The nonthermal O can react with O_t within some reaction radius resulting in the formation of O₂[O+O_t→O₂] described by k_{O,O_t} . These two excitation events give a net production of two H₂ and an O₂.

The principal dissociation channel (H₂O→H+OH), described by σ_d , produces a mobile H. It can also react with O_t, described by k_{H,O_t} , removing trapped O. Nonthermal H and O can also be removed by other reactants R [e.g., $R+H \rightarrow RH(k_{H,R}n_R)$; $R+O \rightarrow RO(k_{O,R}n_R)$, where R can be a radiation product, such as OH, or a contaminant in the ice]. Reaction of a newly formed, mobile and electronically excited OH with O_t might also produce O₂, a process that needs to be tested experimentally. We ignore this in the model and also initially ignore the conversion of trapped O to hydrogen peroxide by an electronic excitation.⁴

The principal reaction pathways considered for oxygen are



This leads to a set of rate equations:

$$dn_O/dt = \sigma'_d \phi n - k_{O,t} n_O n_t - k_{O,R} n_O n_R - k_{O,O_t} n_O n_{O_t}, \quad (6a)$$

$$dn_{O_t}/dt = k_{O,t} n_t n_O - k_{O,O_t} n_O n_{O_t} - k_{H,O_t} n_H n_{O_t}, \quad (6b)$$

$$dn_H/dt = \sigma_d \phi n - k_{H,O_t} n_H n_{O_t} - k_{H,R} n_H n_R, \quad (6c)$$

$$dn_{O_2}/dt = k_{O,O_t} n_O n_{O_t}. \quad (6d)$$

Here n_i is the density of species i in the irradiated volume and n_t is the density of trapping sites. As in Eq. (2), O₂ destruction processes are ignored in Eq. (6d), since for low-energy electrons the newly produced O₂ can escape from the excited near surface layers. For penetrating radiation this changes and O₂ that did not escape can, in principle, be dissociated by a subsequent excitation event. In addition, if direct excitation of the precursor can produce O₂, then the term $[k_{O,O_t} n_O n_{O_t}]$ in Eqs. (6a), (6b), and (6d) is replaced by a term like $\sigma_{O_2} \phi n_{O_t}$. The above equations act in parallel with the equations for formation of OH and hydrogen peroxide described elsewhere.⁴

Integrating the above equations over the depth of escape of O₂ from an irradiated sample, the analytic precursor model of Seiger *et al.*² is recovered.⁴ Therefore, σ_p , σ'_p , σ_{O_2} and σ can now be determined in terms of the rate constants and primary dissociation cross sections.

C. Trapped versus newly produced species

In the solid state the role of defects is critical. Defects are produced by sample formation at low-temperatures and, for penetrating radiation, defects/damage sites are produced by the irradiation itself. Since the newly produced species from an excitation event trap in times short compared to the time scale of the incident particle fluxes typically used, a steady-state background of nonthermal O does not accumulate. Therefore, the above equations can be solved simultaneously. That is, there are trapped O and freshly produced O that rapidly react or trap. If the density of traps is large, then the quantities n_H and n_t , averaged over the bombardment rate, are roughly time independent: $dn_O/dt \sim 0$ and $dn_H/dt \sim 0$. Therefore, only species trapped at defects, pores, or grain surfaces are assumed to be present before a subsequent impact. This is consistent with the lack of a dependence of the O₂ yield on the incident beam flux at those temperatures that have been tested for dose rate effects: < 120 K. Solving Eqs. (6a) and (6c) for n_O and n_H , which describe the transiently mobile O and H, and substituting, Eqs. (6b) and (6d) reduce to the rate equations Eqs. (1) and (2) with O_t as the precursor.

Since the density of trapped O n_{O_t} is small compared with the density of sites at which H can react, then from Eq. (6c) $n_H \sim [\sigma_d \phi n / k_{H,R} n_R]$. For a low radiation flux ϕ , the average value of n_H is small. The O₂ yield Y_{O_2} is equal to $[(dn_{O_2}/dt) \Delta x / \phi]$ with Δx being the O₂ escape depth. The yield can now be written in the form given in Eq. (4a) with an analytic expression for the steady-state yield Y_∞ ,

$$[Y_\infty] / [\sigma'_d N] \approx 1 + \{(q-1) - [(q-1)^2 + 8q\delta]^{0.5}\} / 4\delta,$$

$$q = [k_{O,t}(n_t + n_R)](k_{H,O_t} n_H) / (\sigma'_d \phi n) k_{O,O_t} \\ = (\sigma_d / \sigma'_d) [k_{O,t}(n_t + n_R)] k_{H,O_t} / [k_{O,O_t} k_{H,R} n_R] \quad (7)$$

$$\delta = 0.5 [1 + n_t / (n_t + n_R)].$$

We further note that for large n_t and small ϕ , q can be large. Assuming that $q \gg 1$ and that $n_t \gg n_R$, then Eq. (7) becomes

$$Y_\infty \rightarrow [\sigma'_d N]/d \approx (\sigma'_d \sigma'_d \sigma'_d) N \zeta, \quad (8)$$

$$\zeta = [(k_{O,O} k_{H,R}) / (k_{H,O} k_{O,i})] [n_R / n_t]$$

Here the factor ζ accounts for the competing reactions. The result in Eq. (8) is based on the fact that the production of H is more efficient than the production of O (i.e., $\sigma_d \gg \sigma'_d$) so that the destruction of the precursor, O, by reaction with H is more efficient than the reaction with mobile O to form O₂. Comparing Eq. (8) with the expression for Y_∞ in Eq. (4b), we can write $\sigma_p \sim \sigma'_d$, $\sigma_{O_2} \sim \sigma'_d$ and $\sigma \approx \sigma'_p \sim \sigma_d$. Since mobile H and O affect both the numerator and denominator of ζ , writing $k_i \approx [\sigma_i \nu_i]$, where the σ_i is an interaction cross section (square of an interaction length) and ν_i the mean speed of the mobile species, the ratio $\zeta \approx [(\sigma_{O,O} \sigma_{H,R}) / (\sigma_{H,O} \sigma_{O,i})] \times [n_R / n_t]$ is the ratio of interaction cross sections times the density of reaction sites to density of traps ratio. That is, the precursor destruction rate is proportional to the quenching of O_i by H, which occurs in competition with the loss of mobile H by other reactions including recombination to form H₂O. At saturation, the reaction sites are primarily dissociation products.

It is seen from Eq. (8) that the steady-state yield Y_∞ depends inversely on the density of traps n_t . That is, when the trap density is high, O₂ formation requires that a newly formed O find a trapped O before it becomes trapped or reacts with impurities or other radiation products. Therefore, the observed increase in the O₂ yield with increasing T at low doses is related to the change in the trapping density n_t with increasing temperature of the ice sample. In this model, the small activation energy measured (Fig. 2) is related to the reorientation of defects leading to a reduction in trap density. As the sample formation temperature increases and the density of traps in the bulk decreases, the surface and grain interfaces eventually become the dominant traps.^{22,32} Radiation-induced defects/damage become important trapping sites for penetrating radiation and thus increases of dose can affect the production of molecular oxygen. In addition, O₂ production can increase in the presence of oxygen-rich impurities, such as CO₂ or SO₂, since their dissociation can also provide mobile O. Such species also act as hydrogen scavengers²⁶ affecting the destruction of O_i.

IV. COMPARISON OF MODEL TO DATA

The model above is strongly suggested by the available laboratory data on the radiolysis and photolysis of ice. Here we obtain estimates of σ'_d and σ such as those given in Table I for a few such experiments. We first consider the data for photolysis by ~ 10 eV photons. We then consider the parameters from the fit to the low-energy electron data and obtain parameters for the energetic ion data.

A. UV photolysis

The results of Gerakines *et al.*²⁵ confirm that H₂O₂ forms in ice from two OH after a buildup of trapped OH. They monitored the band associated with H₂O–HO,³³ in which the HO is bound to water with ~ 0.24 eV. Since they monitored a subset of the trapped OH seen in earlier experi-

TABLE I. Parameters for sample data. σ'_d is of the order of 10% of σ_d .

Radiation	E (eV)	T (K)	σ 10^{-16} cm ²	σ_d 10^{-16} cm ²	E_a (eV)
e^a	30–100	50–120	0.8–3	~ 1	0.02–0.03
$h\nu^{b,c}$	~ 10	~ 10	$> 0.1^c$	0.09 ^b	0.03 ^c
He ^{+d}	10 ⁶	40–140	~ 10		0.03
Ne ^{+e}	1.5×10^6	10	62	$< \sim 35$	0.02–0.07

^aSeiger *et al.*, 1998 (Ref. 2); precursor formation $(0.5-2.0) \times 10^{-18}$ cm² (30–100 eV) proportional to $(E-E_o)$, $E_o \sim 10$ eV, $N \sim 10^{15}$ cm².

^bWatanabe *et al.*, 2000 (Ref. 29): saturation of yield of D₂O $\rightarrow 5 \times 10^{-19}$ cm².

^cWestley *et al.*, 1995 (Ref. 34): E_{av} based on D₂O yields, σ based on lowest fluence.

^dBrown *et al.*, 1982 (Ref. 39); based on lowest fluence.

^eReimann *et al.*, 1984 (Ref. 21): σ_d based on $(dE/dx)/W = 92 \times 10^{-15}$ eV cm²/26 eV.

ments, additional experiments are required. Gerakines *et al.*²⁵ also found that peroxide production by 9.8 eV photons saturated around 10^{18} photons/cm². In addition, HO₂ begins to increase with fluence at about a few times 10^{17} /cm² shortly after they begin to detect H₂O₂. However, using Lyman- α photons (10.26 eV) Westley³⁴ found that O₂ formation was roughly independent of fluence down to $\sim 10^{17}$ photons/cm². Therefore, assuming the states accessible at 9.8 eV are similar to those excited by 10.26 eV, H₂O₂ and HO₂ exhibit a nonlinear dependence on fluence at fluences for which O₂ has reached or is approaching steady state. This comparison, in addition to the lack of a fluence offset [Eq. (5)], suggests that H₂O₂ and HO₂ are unlikely the dominant precursors at low fluences. However, experiments on the same apparatus, at the same temperature and with the same photon energy should be carried out.

The lowest fluence studied by Westley *et al.*³⁴ also gives a lower limit to the precursor destruction cross section, σ . This is seen to be of the order of the Lyman- α absorption cross section in ice ($\sim 0.9 \times 10^{-17}$ cm²). Using 9.8 eV photons at low T (12 K) Watanabe *et al.*²⁹ obtained a cross section for production of D₂ (Table I) at low fluences that is ~ 10 –20% of the total absorption cross section with significant uncertainties. This suggests that $\sigma'_d \approx 0.1$ – $0.2 \sigma_d$ in the model above, consistent with gas-phase estimates of dissociation water molecules to O. Since photodissociation can produce an excited O, the role of the excess energy in an ice matrix needs to be evaluated.

B. Low-energy electrons

For the low-energy electron data, Sieger *et al.*^{2,3} reported an O₂ production cross section of $\sim 2 \times 10^{-18}$ cm² for 100 eV incident electron energy. This is of the order of the electron impact ionization cross section for H₂O, consistent with mobile H or mobile protons as the principal destructive agents.

The O₂ yield versus fluence in these experiments was reasonably well fit by the expression in Eqs. (4). Over a narrow range of T , Sieger *et al.*² find $Y_\infty(T) \approx Y'_\infty \times \exp(-E_a/kT)$ with an activation energy $E_a \sim 0.02$ – 0.03 eV consistent with other estimates of an activation energy. Assuming that in the low-energy electron experiments

N is about 3 ML ($\sim 3 \times 10^{15}$ H₂O/cm²), the measured Y_∞ gives $[\sigma_{\text{O}_2}\sigma_p/\sigma] \approx (0.5-2.0) \times 10^{-18}$ cm² over the electron impact energy range of 30–100 eV. At 110–120 K, this ratio was found to be proportional to $E-E_o$ for $E > E_o \sim 10$ eV, again assuming fixed N .^{2,3} Using the sizes of σ and Y_∞ then one obtains $[\sigma_p\sigma_{\text{O}_2}] \sim (0.2-6) \times 10^{-34}$ cm². This size is consistent with both σ_p and σ_{O_2} being described by events of the type $\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{H}_2 + \text{O}(\sigma'_d)$. That is, they are consistent with O being formed for $\sim 10\%$ of the radiation-induced dissociation events ($\sigma'_d \sim 0.1\sigma_d$).

The cross section for production of O may depend on the availability of dangling bonds at interfaces, in pores, or at defects, as suggested by a number of authors. However, the defect and trap densities are critical, as shown here. The role of defects is consistent with the low activation energy and differences observed in the electron-induced yield for initially crystalline and amorphous ice.³ At relatively high T , the density of initially formed traps becomes small and the mobility of defects is high, so that the sample surface or grain interfaces are the principal trapping sites. For this reason, it is important to determine if the yield for T greater than ~ 140 K depends on the incident flux ϕ , i.e., the dose rate. Pulsed radiolysis experiments in thick ice, in which the transients are studied rather than the steady-state yields, are required.

C. Incident ions: Escape from depth

Even though the shower of secondary electrons produced in a solid by a fast incident ion can result in multiple excitations locally, the yield versus fluence for O₂ production also varies linearly with fluence at low fluences.²¹ For low T , this yield is also independent of dose rate at low-dose rates suggesting O₂ formation via a chemical precursor. The O₂ yield versus fluence in Fig. 1(a) for incident ions at low doses can also be roughly fit by the expressions in Eq. (4). However, the fit is not as good as it is for the low-energy electrons suggesting other effects are important. In addition, Y_∞ vs T was shown to have two “plateaus:” one for very low doses and one at higher doses with activation energies in the range $\sim 0.02-0.07$ eV. These differences indicate that additional precursors can be formed in the ion track and that the ion penetration and escape depth for a newly produced O₂ are important. That is, the quantity N in Eq. (1) is the “depth” from which O₂ formed below the surface can percolate to the surface and escape.^{35,36} Ignoring these differences and fitting the data for the incident 1.5 MeV Ne⁺ at 10 K, one obtains $\sigma = 60 \times 10^{-16}$ cm². This is comparable to size of the molecular destruction cross section, $\sigma_d \approx 30 \times 10^{-16}$ cm² by these ions (Table I).

At saturation (steady state) a single new event leading to an O can lead to the production O₂ from the steady-state density of trapped precursors in the model proposed here. Therefore, allowing for changes in sample structure, the yield at saturation should be nearly linear in the excitation cross section. This is the case for the low-energy electrons,² and it was initially assumed to be the case for the fast ions.^{21,37} However, Baragiola *et al.*³⁸ showed that for a temperature at which decomposition dominates the sputtering of

ice,³⁹ the steady-state yield (Y_∞) is proportional to the square of the electronic energy deposition per unit path length in the solid. If the production and destruction cross sections in Y_∞ in Eq. (4b) roughly scale with $(dE/dx)_e$, the ratio $[\sigma_p\sigma_{\text{O}_2}/\sigma]$ also varies as $(dE/dx)_e$. Therefore, we propose that the quantity N in Y_∞ also varies with $(dE/dx)_e$. That is, the depth N from which O₂ can be mobilized to escape depends on the excitation density $(dE/dx)_e$. This is consistent with the observation that the O₂ yield depends on thickness for samples thinner than the ion penetration depth.^{21,35} Based on the proposed model, a description of the percolation depth for escape, N , is required to compare the yields for penetrating radiation with those for nonpenetrating radiation. Since the defects/damage produced by the ions can affect both the density of traps and the percolation of O₂, the low-energy electron and UV photons experiments provide better tests of the chemistry for molecular oxygen production.

V. SUMMARY

The exciting observations of thin oxygen atmospheres and oxidants trapped in the icy surfaces on outer solar system bodies^{5,6} have lead to increased interest by chemists in the radiation-induced production of oxygen in ice. Although this is a process that has been studied for a half century, quite remarkably, no quantitative model existed. In this paper we first summarized the principal results of those experiments and then give a solid-state chemical model for the production of O₂ in ice at low doses. The model is consistent with the available data for formation of oxygen due to electronic excitations in ice produced by fast ions, low-energy electrons, and UV photons at low temperatures.

In our model, trapped oxygen atoms are the dominant precursor to the formation of molecular oxygen at low radiation doses. The proposed rate equations are integrated to obtain an analytic model for the fluence and temperature dependences of the O₂ yield. In deriving the analytic model from the rate equations, the competition between the formation and destruction processes is accounted for. The role of trapping sites and escape from depth for penetrating radiation are also accounted for. These are both affected by the thermal and radiation histories of the sample. This has allowed us to put low-dose data for incident photons, electrons, and energetic ions on the same basis for the first time.

The proposed model suggests measurements that are needed to describe the chemical state of the irradiated ice and to interpret new laboratory data. For instance, the proposed precursor, trapped O, may be detectable. In addition, much more data are needed on the production of oxygen by UV photons, especially as this process is thought to produce the oxygen atmosphere recently observed over Saturn's rings.⁵ Studies of possible dose rate effects above ~ 140 K are needed to test the limit of applicability of the trapped precursor model. Studies of the affect of impurities, such as carbon and sulfur species, are needed as these can compete with defect sites to scavenge O. Scavenging by impurities is known to affect the radiolytic yields. This could have been a problem in the earlier experiments but, quite remarkably, more recent results, using ultrahigh vacuum and the vapor

deposition of purified water samples, give similar results. Scavenging by impurities is also of considerable astrophysical interest and has been suggested to be consistent with the observation of primarily oxygen-rich carbon and sulfur species on the icy satellites.^{4,6} It has also been suggested²⁹ that the direct production of H₂ and the production of the precursor^{2,22} will be enhanced at the ice surface or at an internal surface in a porous sample. Therefore, the correlation of the formation temperature and radiation damage with the defect density and the formation of trapped O need to be studied in detail. Finally, it is also important to describe quantitatively the relationship between H₂ loss and the competition between O₂ and H₂O₂ formations over a range of temperatures and fluences. Such experiments are in progress and the model above will provide a framework for interpreting new data. More importantly, this model can now be used to apply the presently available laboratory data to understanding the observations of molecular oxygen on icy bodies in the outer solar system, an exciting new aspect in planetary science.

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