Structure and Vibrational Spectra of the Vapour Molecules Fe$_2$Cl$_6$ and AlFeCl$_6$

Z. Akdeniz$^{a,b}$ and M. P. Tosi$^{a,c}$

$^a$ Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, 34014 Trieste, Italy
$^b$ Department of Physics, University of Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey
$^c$ Istituto Nazionale di Fisica della Materia, Classe di Scienze, Scuola Normale Superiore, 56126 Pisa, Italy

Reprint requests to Prof. M. P. T.; Fax: +39-50-563513

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Melting of aluminium and iron trichloride crystals is accompanied by a structural transition from octahedral to tetrahedral coordination of the metal ions, and a widely accepted interpretation of their liquid structure is that it mainly consists of strongly correlated dimeric units. Such Al$_2$Cl$_6$ and Fe$_2$Cl$_6$ molecules are stable in the vapour phase and coexist in gaseous mixtures together with AlFeCl$_6$ molecules. In this work we extend to Fe$_2$Cl$_6$ and AlFeCl$_6$ our earlier study of the ionic interactions in Al$_2$Cl$_6$ [Z. Akdeniz and M. P. Tosi, Z. Naturforsch. 54a, 180 (1999)], using a model which accounts for ionic deformability through (i) effective valences and (ii) electrostatic and overlap polarizabilities. The main disposable parameters of the model are adjusted to the Fe–Cl bond length in FeCl$_3$ monomer molecule and to the Fe–Fe bond length and a bond-stretching frequency in the Fe$_2$Cl$_6$ molecule. The results are used to evaluate the structure of the AlFeCl$_6$ molecule, which has so far only been inferred from the observed Raman spectrum in mixed vapours. Extensive comparisons with data on molecular vibrational frequencies are also presented for Fe$_2$Cl$_6$ and AlFeCl$_6$.

Key words: Ionic Clusters; Molecular Vapours; Molten Salts.