

**MODELLING BIOLOGICAL MACROMOLECULES IN SOLUTION:
THE GENERAL TRI-AXIAL ELLIPSOID**

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Appendix VII Comparison of the radius of gyration for a sphere of uniform mass with that for a sphere of the same mass but with a spherical cavity

The radius of gyration, R_G of a sphere of uniform mass and radius R is given by:

$$R_G^2 = \frac{\int_0^R 4\pi r^4 dr}{\int_0^R 4\pi r^2 dr} = \frac{3}{5}R^2 \quad (i)$$

(Tanford, p 306, 1961). The radius of gyration of a spherical shell of uniform mass with radius R_2 and with a centrally placed spherical cavity of radius R_1 is given by:

$$R_G^2 = \frac{\int_{R_1}^{R_2} 4\pi r^4 dr}{\int_{R_1}^{R_2} 4\pi r^2 dr} = \frac{3}{5} \left(\frac{R_2^5 - R_1^5}{R_2^3 - R_1^3} \right) \quad (ii)$$

The results of electron microscopy and x-ray diffraction (Harrison, 1959, Farrant, 1954, Kuff & Dalton, 1957, Labaw & Wycoff, 1957) suggest that apoferritin consists of twenty four sub-units, each of molecular weight 20,000, arranged in the form of a spherical shell of diameter 109 Å. If we take the radius of the hollow to be 18.5 Å, and the outer radius of the shell to be 54.5 Å, R_G is calculated using formula (ii) to be 43.0 Å. The radius of gyration, had the same mass been concentrated into a uniform sphere of density identical to the shell would have been 41.6 Å, using formula (i); i.e. a discrepancy of ~3.4%

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