Published in final edited form as:

Biophys Chem. 2007 November ; 130(3): 114–121.

A Comparative Mössbauer Study of the Mineral Cores of Human H-Chain Ferritin Employing Dioxygen and Hydrogen Peroxide as Iron Oxidants

Fadi Bou-Abdallah^a, Elissa Carney^b, N. Dennis Chasteen^a, Paolo Arosio^c, Arthur J. Viescas^b, and Georgia C. Papaefthymiou^{b,*}

^aDepartment of Chemistry, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824, United States

^bDepartment of Physics, Villanova University, Villanova, PA 19085, United States

^cChemistry Section, Faculty of Medicine, University of Brescia, 25123 Brescia, Italy

Abstract

Ferritins are ubiquitous iron storage and detoxification proteins distributed throughout the plant and animal kingdoms. Mammalian ferritins oxidize and accumulate iron as a ferrihydrite mineral within a shell-like protein cavity. Iron deposition utilizes both O₂ and H₂O₂ as oxidants for Fe²⁺ where oxidation can occur either at protein ferroxidase centers or directly on the surface of the growing mineral core. The present study was undertaken to determine whether the nature of the mineral core formed depends on the protein ferroxidase center versus mineral surface mechanism and on H₂O₂ versus O₂ as the oxidant. The data reveal that similar cores are produced in all instances, suggesting that the structure of the core is thermodynamically, not kinetically controlled. Cores averaging 500 Fe/protein shell and diameter ~ 2.6 nm were prepared and exhibited superparamagnetic blocking temperatures of 19 and 22 K for the H₂O₂ and O₂ oxidized samples, respectively. The observed blocking temperatures are consistent with the unexpectedly large effective anisotropy constant K_{eff} = 312 kJ/m³ recently reported for ferrihydrite nanoparticles formed in reverse micelles (Duarte et al., *Nanotechnology* 17 (2006) 5549-5555). All ferritin samples exhibited two magnetic phases present in nearly equal amounts and ascribed to iron spins at the surface and in the interior of the nanoparticle. At 4.2 K, the surface spins exhibit hyperfine fields, H_{hf}, of 436 and 445 kOe for the H₂O₂ and O₂ samples, respectively. As expected, the spins in the interior of the core exhibit larger H_{hf} values, *i.e.* 478 and 486 kOe, respectively. The slightly smaller hyperfine field distribution DH_{hf} for both surface (78 kOe vs. 92 kOe) and interior spins (45 kOe vs. 54 kOe) of the O₂ sample compared to the H₂O₂ samples implies that the former is somewhat more crystalline.

Keywords

Mössbauer spectroscopy; ferrihydrite; ferritin; iron oxidation; hydrogen peroxide

1. Introduction

Ferritins are a family of iron storage and detoxification proteins present in animals, plants and microbes. The protein has a shell-like structure composed of 24 similar or identical subunits

*Corresponding author. Tel: +1 610-519-4883 fax: +1 610-519-7465, *E-mail address*: gcp@villanova.edu (G. C. Papaefthymiou)

Publisher's Disclaimer: This is a PDF file of an unedited manuscript that has been accepted for publication. As a service to our customers we are providing this early version of the manuscript. The manuscript will undergo copyediting, typesetting, and review of the resulting proof before it is published in its final citable form. Please note that during the production process errors may be discovered which could affect the content, and all legal disclaimers that apply to the journal pertain.

encapsulating a hydrous ferric oxide mineral core, the storage form of iron [1-4]. More recently, ferritin-like Dps proteins (DNA binding protein from starved cells) composed of only 12 subunits have been discovered in bacteria and likewise form mineral cores albeit of much smaller size, ~ 500 Fe/shell versus ~ 4500 Fe/shell for canonical ferritins [4-8]. The canonical ferritins and the Dps proteins have ferroxidase centers that initiate and/or sustain mineralization [1-11]. The ferroxidase centers of mammalian ferritins are located on H-type subunits whereas L-subunits appear to play a role in nucleation of the mineral core [11]. In human H-chain ferritin (HuHF), it is now recognized that there are three chemical pathways for developing the mineral core [12]. Equation (1) represents

the overall reaction catalyzed by the 24 ferroxidase centers of the protein where Fe^{2+} is oxidized by O_2 . The resultant Fe^{3+} is subsequently transferred to the mineral core. Much of the hydrogen peroxide produced in Eq. (1) reacts through Eq. (2), the detoxification reaction, which also occurs at the ferroxidase centers. Fe^{2+} is oxidized at the ferroxidase centers by both O_2 and H_2O_2 via Eqs. (1) and (2) at comparable rates [13]. The pairwise oxidation of two Fe^{2+} per H_2O_2 avoids the odd electron chemistry associated with hydroxyl radical production via the Fenton reaction and accounts for the detoxification properties of ferritin and its ability to protect cells from oxidative damage [14-17]. Once a sufficient core has been developed (≥ 800 Fe/shell), Eq. (3) becomes the dominant reaction where Fe^{2+} is oxidized on the surface of the mineral in an autocatalytic fashion and O_2 is reduced completely to water [12]. In the case of Dps proteins from bacteria, H_2O_2 is the primary oxidant for Fe^{2+} at the ferroxidase centers of these proteins and the mineralization reaction proceeds according to Eq. (2) [7,8].

The structure of the ferritin core has been extensively reviewed [18-20]. It is generally agreed that the core is structurally similar to ferrihydrite, the structure of which has been recently determined [20]. The formula $\text{Fe}_{10}\text{O}_{14}(\text{OH})_2$ for ferrihydrite in an ideal structure is abbreviated here as simply $\text{Fe}(\text{O})\text{OH}_{(\text{core})}$. Electron microscopy suggests that the core may be single crystalline or polycrystalline, nucleated at different points within the protein shell [19]. More recent electron nano-diffraction experiments with a 1 nm beam diameter indicate that each core contains a single phase, but different cores in the mix could contain different phases, some amorphous and some crystalline [21]. Thus, questions about the exact nature of the ferritin biomineralization product, its dependence on sample handling and detailed conditions of preparation remain. In nature, additional components, such as phosphates, add to the diversity of ferritin cores extracted from different sources [2,22]. In vitro reconstituted ferritin, however, is expected to be in the form of ferrihydrite. The majority of previous Mössbauer investigations have dealt with half to fully loaded ferritin cores (1000 – 4500 Fe/shell), with the very early stages of iron complexation with the protein (50 Fe/shell) or with small clusters that are precursors to more fully developed cores [23,24].

To date the Mössbauer properties of cores of intermediate size (500 Fe/shell) have not been investigated nor has there been a study addressing the structural and magnetic properties of cores formed with H_2O_2 versus O_2 as the oxidant and whether there is a significant difference between cores generated via the ferroxidase reaction (Eqs (1) and (2)) and the mineral surface reaction (Eq. (3)). In the present investigation we have examined HuHF at intermediate levels of iron loading, 500 Fe/protein shell on average, and evaluated the Mössbauer spectra of the nanoparticle cores formed with these two oxidants. The results reveal that similar cores are

obtained whether Fe^{2+} is oxidized by O_2 or H_2O_2 and whether the core is produced from ferroxidase centered catalyzed iron oxidation or from autocatalytic oxidation of iron on the growing mineral surface. The cores obtained using either oxidant are composed of two magnetic phases, one corresponding to iron interior to the mineral core (subsites 1) and the other to iron at the surface of the core (subsites 2).

2. Materials and Methods

Recombinant H-chain ferritin was prepared as previously described [25] and rendered iron free by anaerobic ultra filtration with dithionite and bipyridyl [26]. The H-chain concentration was determined by the absorbance at 280 nm using $\epsilon = 23000 \text{ M}^{-1}\text{cm}^{-1}$ per subunit. The final H-chain ferritin and iron concentrations were 20 μM and 0.01 M, respectively (500 Fe/shell), in an aqueous buffer solution of 0.15 M (sample #1) or 0.075 M (samples #2, 3, 4) Mops, pH 7.0. The oxidation of iron by H_2O_2 in HuHF was performed under anaerobic conditions using ultra high pure argon gas (99.995%, < 5 ppm O_2). For sample #1, 12 μl of 0.5 M H_2O_2 was titrated into a 500 μl Fe^{2+} -HuHF solution in increments of 1 μl per addition corresponding to 0.1 $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{Fe(II)}$ added each time to give a final ratio of $\sim 1.2 \text{ H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{Fe(II)}$. For samples # 2 and # 3, 220 μl ^{57}Fe (500 Fe/shell) was added at once to 220 μl HuHF solution in 21 or 100% O_2 and allowed to react overnight. For sample # 4, 220 μl ^{57}Fe was added to 220 μl HuHF (100 % O_2) in increments of 50 Fe(II)/shell for a total of 10 increments.

The $^{57}\text{FeSO}_4$ solution was prepared by dissolving 1.104 mg of ^{57}Fe metal (95.1 atom %; U.S. Service, Inc. Summit, NJ, USA) in 200 μl of 0.2 M H_2SO_4 (14% v/v) over a period of 3 days, followed by dilution with 750 μl water to produce a final solution of 20 mM FeSO_4 , pH ~ 2.0 .

A conventional transmission Mössbauer spectrometer was used. Sample temperature was varied in the range $4.2 \leq T \leq 120 \text{ K}$, employing a continuous flow liquid He cryostat by Janis Corporation and a Lake Shore temperature controller. The source was ^{57}Co in Rh matrix maintained at room temperature. A 6 μm -thick iron foil enriched in ^{57}Fe was used for calibration. All isomer shifts are referred to $\alpha\text{-Fe}$ at room temperature. Least-square fits to the experimental data were performed by a least-square fitting procedure to Lorentzian absorption lines, including distribution of hyperfine parameters.

3. Results and Discussion

A comparative Mössbauer study of the ferritin iron cores formed upon oxidation in exclusively 100 % O_2 atmosphere ($\sim 1.3 \text{ mM O}_2$ solution, sample #3) vs. $\sim 12 \text{ mM H}_2\text{O}_2$ solution (sample #1) was carried out, over the temperature range of $4.2 \leq T \leq 120 \text{ K}$. The complete Mössbauer spectral thermal profiles are presented in Figures 1 and 2, while Figure 3 shows the 4.2K data with the associated hyperfine field distributions. Derived Mössbauer parameters are summarized in Table 1. The 4.2 K spectrum for a sample prepared with a 21% O_2 atmosphere ($\sim 0.28 \text{ mM}$ solution, sample #2) is identical to that of the 100% O_2 sample. It has been previously shown that the kinetics of iron oxidation saturates in rate at about 0.30 mM O_2 for the horse spleen protein [27].

The resulting iron core phases obtained with either O_2 or H_2O_2 as the oxidant for Fe ions are very similar, as judged from their Mössbauer spectra, even though detailed examination reveals some differences. Similarly, whether Fe^{2+} is added to the protein in 10 increments of 50 Fe (sample #4) or 500 Fe at once (sample #3) with 100% O_2 as the oxidant produces cores that are indistinguishable at 4.2 K. The incremental addition of iron produces cores largely through the ferroxidase reaction 1 [9,12,27] whereas the single addition of 500 Fe produces cores that are generated by all three reactions ($\sim 40\%$, 28% and $\sim 32\%$ by Eqs. (1),(2) and (3), respectively) [12]. We conclude that the various core formation reactions utilizing O_2 or

H₂O₂ as the oxidant, through the protein ferroxidase site or directly on the growing core, all lead to substantially the same mineral. This result was unexpected given the markedly different chemistries involved in producing the core by the three reactions. The thermodynamic stability of the nanoparticle phase rather than kinetics appears to govern the final product in all cases.

The spectra with either O₂ or H₂O₂ conform to those of superparamagnetic ferrihydrite [28-31] with a blocking temperature around 20 K. Specific features include broad spectral absorption lines, characteristic of poor phase crystallinity, and asymmetrically broadened magnetic hyperfine absorption lines. In order to obtain least-squares fits with acceptable χ^2 values, experimental spectra required at least the superposition of two iron subsites, both in the collapsed superparamagnetic state seen at high temperature (120 K) and in the low temperature (4.2 K) magnetically split state. The quadrupolar spectra at 120 K were fit with the superposition of two doublets with similar isomer shifts but markedly different quadrupole splittings. Fitted Mössbauer parameters for the O₂-oxidized sample at T = 120 K are $\delta_1 = 0.46$ mm/s, $\Delta_{Q1} = 0.55$ mm/s comprising 55% of absorption intensity; and $\delta_2 = 0.46$ mm/s and $\Delta_{Q2} = 1.01$ mm/s comprising 45% of absorption intensity. The corresponding parameters for the H₂O₂-oxidized sample are: $\delta_1 = 0.46$ mm/s, $\Delta_{Q1} = 0.59$ mm/s comprising 59% of absorption intensity and $\delta_2 = 0.46$ mm/s and $\Delta_{Q2} = 1.04$ mm/s comprising 41% of absorption intensity. The large quadrupole splittings for high spin Fe³⁺ sites observed at the surface point to severely distorted iron coordination at the surface compared to the interior.

At 4.2 K the magnetically split spectra also required the superposition of two magnetic subsites 1 & 2 (depicted in broken red and blue lines in Figures 1 and 2) with broad hyperfine field distributions, shown in Figure 3. Average hyperfine fields of $\langle H_{hf} \rangle_1 = 486$ kOe and $\langle H_{hf} \rangle_2 = 445$ kOe for the O₂-oxidized sample, and $\langle H_{hf} \rangle_1 = 478$ kOe and $\langle H_{hf} \rangle_2 = 436$ kOe for the H₂O₂-oxidized sample were obtained. Minority components of quadrupolar doublets are still discernable at 4.2 K, (shown in solid red and blue lines) comprising less than 2% of total absorption area for both O₂ and H₂O₂ samples (Table 1). These observations all point to some heterogeneity in the cores, both in size and degrees of crystallinity, consistent with previous observations with ferritins of different types [32-33]. The broader hyperfine field distributions DH_{hf} seen for both spectral subcomponents of the H₂O₂ sample compared to the O₂ sample in Figure 3 suggests greater heterogeneity (lower crystallinity) in the former. Values for the field distributions DH_{hf} are given in Table 1.

Magnetic subcomponent 1 (broken red line in Figs. 1 and 2 for O₂ and H₂O₂ samples, respectively) exhibits slow-spin-relaxation up to 20 K, before collapsing to a quadrupolar doublet; in contrast, subcomponent 2 is grossly broadened, consistent with intermediate-spin-relaxation. Figure 4 shows the temperature dependence of the fraction of magnetic to total spectral absorption area, f , for the H₂O₂ and O₂ samples. The solid lines through the data points are least-square fits to sigmoidal curves. Operationally, the blocking temperature for a distribution of particle sizes is defined as the temperature at which $f = 0.5$. This determines $T_B = 19$ K and 22 K for H₂O₂- and O₂-oxidized proteins respectively, indicated by the arrows in Figure 4. The observed blocking temperatures are much lower than the average blocking temperature for horse spleen ferritin containing an average of $\sim 3,000$ Fe/shell, namely $\langle T_B \rangle = 38$ K [34]. As would be expected, this result indicates that at 500 Fe/shell the average core size is smaller than the fully loaded ferritin cores of 8 nm diameter containing $\sim 4,500$ Fe [35].

The observed temperature dependence of the magnetic fraction as the sample goes through the blocking temperature contains information on the particle size distribution in the sample, through the temperature dependence of the derivative df/dT [36]. The superparamagnetic relaxation time, τ_s , is governed by Eq. (4) where τ_0 is a constant

$$\tau_s = \tau_0 \exp(K_{eff} V / k_B T) \quad (4)$$

characteristic of the material, K_{eff} is the effective magnetic anisotropy density, k_B is Boltzmann's constant and T is the temperature [37-39]. At a certain temperature particles smaller than a critical size are superparamagnetic, while those larger than this size are magnetically blocked, and thus, contribute to the magnetic fraction of the Mössbauer spectrum. At the blocking temperature, the relaxation time becomes equal to τ_L , the Larmor precession time of the ^{57}Fe -nuclear spin in its excited state, in the effective field at the nucleus. Using $\tau_L = 2.5 \times 10^{-8}$ s, $\tau_0 = 10^{-12}$ s, previously determined for ferritin [40], and $K_{\text{eff}} = 312$ kJ/m³ as recently determined for the ferrihydrite nanoparticles in reverse micelles [28], we can map blocking temperature to particle size, as indicated in Figure 4 (top axis). The blocking temperatures of 22 and 19 K correspond to average particle size of ~ 2.66 and ~ 2.53 nm diameter for the O₂- and H₂O₂-oxidized proteins, respectively. These values compare favorably with the average core size of 2.6 ± 0.8 nm ($N = 100$) recently reported for HoSF to which 500 Fe had been added to the apoprotein and the core size distribution measured by transmission electron microscopy [41]. It is noteworthy that the anisotropy constant K_{eff} determined for micelles is about 50 times larger than the value of $K_{\text{eff}} = 6.7$ kJ/m³ previously measured on ferritins containing an average of 1730-2480 Fe/shell [35]. Contributions other than the magnetocrystalline anisotropy of the bulk become dominant in small particles resulting from surface, shape and strain anisotropies [34].

Investigation of the properties of small magnetically ordered particles has been an active area of research for a number of years. Significant contributions by the Mössbauer community have elucidated small particle magnetism of iron containing systems in general, and the iron biomineral core of ferritin, in particular. It is generally agreed that surface atoms have distorted coordination relative to inner, core atoms, leading to larger quadruple splitting, spin canting and significantly reduced hyperfine magnetic fields at the surface relative to inner core atoms [42-45]. In experimental studies, including transmission Mössbauer Spectroscopy, the surface contribution to the spectral profile becomes increasingly observable as the average particle size decreases. Thus, for these exceptionally small ferrihydrite particles, it is reasonable to associate the two spectral components observed to inner core vs. surface iron atoms, as previously proposed specifically for the ferritin iron core, based on water proton T_2 relaxometry studies [46]. For a spherical core, the number of surface Fe atoms n_S is related to the total Fe in the core n_T by the relationship $n_S = 4 \cdot n_T^{2/3}$ [47]. For a core of $n_T = 500$ Fe, we calculate $n_S = 252$, corresponding to about 50% of the iron being at the surface. This value is comparable to the percentages derived from fitting of the Mössbauer spectra (Table 1) and argues for cores of 500 Fe/shell size being approximately spherical in shape in HuHF. In the case of HoSF (500 Fe/shell) the cores are irregular in shape [41]; however, ultracentrifugation studies of HoSF and HuHF show that HuHF used here produces cores of much more uniform size [48], an observation pointing to the importance of the protein shell and its associated ferroxidase and nucleation sites in governing the nature of the core particle obtained. More complicated geometries are likely present in larger core particles and are dependent on sample preparation and represent a larger percentage of Fe being on the surface relative to a spherical particle as discussed elsewhere [47].

Figure 5 gives a plot of the average hyperfine magnetic field values, obtained from the least-square fits to distributions of magnetic hyperfine fields, with respect to temperature. The temperature dependence of the hyperfine field associated with inner sites is consistent with the theory of collective magnetic excitations of Mørup and Topsøe [49], according to which precession of the particle's magnetization about the anisotropy axis, at temperatures insufficient to induce a full spin-flip and therefore superparamagnetic relaxation, results in a slight diminution of the recorded hyperfine field. A linear decrease of the hyperfine field is predicted according to $H_{\text{hf}}(T) = H_{\text{hf}}^0 (1 - k_B T / 2K_{\text{eff}})$, where H_{hf}^0 is the saturated hyperfine field at 0 K. A maximum decrease in the value of the field of about 15% from saturation is expected through this process. In contrast, subcomponent 2 exhibits a marked decrease in hyperfine field values

with increasing temperature. This observation is consistent with theories of many-spin nano-magnet systems, where surface anisotropies introduce spin canting and a greater complexity in the potential energy landscape that supports low energy spin-wave excitations and produces steps and minor hysteresis loops in SQUID magnetization measurements [50].

Characteristically, a similar deviation in behavior is predicted in theoretical calculations of a many-spin cluster system [51] for the inner versus surface local magnetization, σ , which is proportionally related to the local hyperfine field. As the Larmor precession time, τ_L , of the ^{57}Fe nuclear spin is proportional the local hyperfine field, the surface spins enter an intermediate relaxation regime prior to $T = 20\text{ K}$; in contrast, at 20 K the inner spins undergo a slow to fast spin relaxation transition, for the characteristic Mossbauer measuring time of $\sim 10^{-8}\text{ s}$, when thermal energy overcomes the potential barrier, $K_{\text{eff}}V$, and the particle becomes superparamagnetic.

The surface hyperfine fields associated with the H_2O_2 - oxidized protein exhibit a sharper decrease with increasing temperature (Figure 5, blue dots) compared to those of O_2 - oxidized protein (Figure 5, red dots); while the hyperfine fields associated with inner iron sites exhibit similar temperature dependence, independent of the nature of the oxidant. This would indicate that the two types of cores must differ in some minor characteristics at their surface, where unpassivated, dangling free bonds contribute positive Gibbs free energy to the particle.

4. Conclusion

In summary, Mössbauer measurements have been made for the first time on ferritin cores of intermediate size (500 Fe/shell) using both H_2O_2 and the more conventional oxidant O_2 employed in previous studies. Significantly, the cores generated are independent of the oxidant employed, the partial pressure of O_2 used and the reaction pathway (Eqs. (1), (2) or (3)). A consistent picture emerges of the nanoparticle core, one of approximately spherical shape of diameter $\sim 2.6\text{ nm}$ with 50% of the Fe residing on the surface. The magnetic properties of surface iron likely contribute significantly to T_2 relaxation enhancement in proton magnetic resonance images of iron loaded tissues [46]. The observed blocking temperatures support the notion that smaller iron oxide nanoparticles can have significantly larger effective anisotropy constants K_{eff} .

Acknowledgement

This research was supported by NIH grant R01GM20194 (NDC) and by NSF grant DNR-0074537 (GCP).

Abbreviations

HoSF, horse spleen ferritin; HuHF, recombinant human H-chain ferritin; Mops, 3-(N-morpholino)propanesulfonic acid.

References

1. Theil EC, Matzapetakis M, Liu X. Ferritins: iron/oxygen biominerals in protein nanocages. *JBIC* 2006;11:803–810. [PubMed: 16868744]
2. Chasteen ND, Harrison PM. Mineralization in ferritin: An efficient means of iron storage. *J. Struct. Biol* 1999;126:182–194. [PubMed: 10441528]
3. Andrews SC, Robinson AK, Rodríguez-Quinones F. Bacterial Iron Homeostasis. *FEMS Microbiol. Rev* 2003;27:215–237. [PubMed: 12829269]
4. Smith JL. The Physiological Role of Ferritin-Like Compounds in Bacteria. *Crit. Rev. Microbiol* 2004;30:173–185. [PubMed: 15490969]
5. Chiancone E, Ceci P, Ilari A, Ribacchi F, Stefanini S. Iron and proteins for iron storage and detoxification. *BioMetals* 2004;17:197–202. [PubMed: 15222465]

6. Su M, Cavallo S, Stefanini S, Chiancone E, Chasteen ND. The so-called *Listeria innocua* ferritin is a Dps protein. Iron incorporation, detoxification and DNA protection properties. *Biochemistry* 2005;44:5572–5578. [PubMed: 15823015]
7. Zhao G, Ceci P, Ilari A, Giangiacomo L, Laue TM, Chiancone E, Chasteen ND. Iron and hydrogen peroxide detoxification properties of DNA-binding protein from starved cells. A ferritin-like DNA-binding protein of *Escherichia coli*. *J. Biol. Chem* 2002;277:27689–27696. [PubMed: 12016214]
8. Ilari A, Stefanini S, Chiancone E, Tsernoglou D. The dodecameric ferritin from *Listeria innocua* contains a novel intersubunit iron-binding site. *Nat. Struct. Biol* 2000;7:38–43. [PubMed: 10625425]
9. Bou-Abdallah F, Zhao G, Mayne HR, Arosio P, Chasteen ND. Origin of the unusual kinetics of iron deposition in human H-Chain ferritin. *J. Am. Chem. Soc* 2005;127:3885–3893. [PubMed: 15771525]
10. Ilari A, Latella MC, Ceci P, Ribacchi F, Su M, Giangiacomo L, Stefanini S, Chasteen ND, Chiancone E. The unusual intersubunit ferroxidase center of *Listeria innocua* Dps is required for hydrogen peroxide detoxification but not for iron uptake. A study with site-specific mutants". *Biochemistry* 2005;44:5579–5587. [PubMed: 15823016]
11. Harrison PM, Arosio P. Ferritins: Molecular Properties, Iron Storage Function and Cellular Regulation. *Biochim. Biophys. Acta* 1996;1275:161–203. [PubMed: 8695634]
12. Zhao G, Bou-Abdallah F, Arosio P, Levi S, Janus-Chandler C, Chasteen ND. Multiple pathways for mineral core formation in mammalian apoferritin. The role of hydrogen peroxide. *Biochemistry* 2003;42:3142–3150. [PubMed: 12627982]
13. Bunker J, Lowry T, David G, Zhang B, Brosnahan D, Lindsay S, Costen R, Choi S, Arosio P, Watt GD. Kinetics of iron deposition catalyzed by recombinant human liver heavy and light ferritins and *Azotobacter vinelandii* bacterioferritin using O₂ and H₂O₂ as oxidants. *Biophys. Chem* 2005;114:235–244. [PubMed: 15829358]
14. Zhao G, Arosio P, Chasteen ND, Zhao G, Arosio P, Chasteen ND. Iron(II) and hydrogen peroxide detoxification properties of human H-chain ferritin. An EPR Spin-Trapping Study. *Biochemistry* 2006;45:3429–3436. [PubMed: 16519538]
15. Cozzi A, Corsi B, Levi S, Santambrogio P, Albertini A, Arosio P. Overexpression of wild type and mutated human ferritin H-chain in HeLa cells: *in vivo* role of ferritin ferroxidase activity. *J. Biol. Chem* 2000;275:25122–25129. [PubMed: 10833524]
16. Epsztejn S, Glickstein H, Picard V, Slotki IN, Breuer W, Beaumont C, Cabantchik ZI. H-ferritin subunit overexpression in erythroid cells reduces the oxidative stress response and induces multidrug resistance properties. *Blood* 1999;94:3593–3603. [PubMed: 10552971]
17. Thompson KJ, Fried MG, Ye Z, Boyer P, Connor JR. Regulation, mechanisms and proposed function of ferritin translocation to cell nuclei. *J. Cell Sci* 2002;115:2165–2177. [PubMed: 11973357]
18. Pierre, TG.; Webb, J.; Mann, S. Biomineralization: Chemical and Biochemical Perspectives. In: Man, S.; Webb, J.; Williams, RJP., editors. Ferritin and hemosiderin: Structural and magnetic studies of the iron core. VCH; Weinheim, Germany: 1989. p. 295
19. Massover WH. Ultrastructure of ferritin and apoferritin: A review. *Micron* 1993;24:389–437.
20. Michel FM, Ehm L, Antao SM, Lee PL, Chupas PJ, Liu G, Strongin DR, Schoonen MAA, Phillips BL, Parise JB. The structure of ferrihydrite, a nanocrystalline material. *Science Express*. May 24;2007 (10.1126/science.1142525 (Science Express Reports)
21. Cowley JM, Janney DE, Gerkin RC, Buseck PR. The structure of ferritin cores determined by electron nanodiffraction. *J. Struct. Biol* 2000;131:210–216. [PubMed: 11052893]
22. Cheng YG, Chasteen ND. Role of phosphate in initial iron deposition in apoferritin. *Biochemistry* 1991;30:2947–2953. [PubMed: 2007131]and references therein
23. Bauminger ER, Harrison PM. Ferritin, the Path of Iron into the Core, as seen by Mössbauer Spectroscopy. *Hyperfine Interact* 2003;151/152:3–19.and references therein
24. Bauminger ER, Harrison PM, Hechel D, Hudson NW, Nowik I, Treffy A, Yewdall SJ. Iron(II) oxidation and early intermediates in iron-core formation in recombinant human H-chain ferritin. *Biochem. J* 1993;296:709–719. [PubMed: 8280069]
25. Santambrogio P, Cozzi A, Levi S, Rovida E, Magni F, Albertini A, Arosio P. Functional and immunological analysis of recombinant mouse H- and L-ferritins from *Escherichia coli*. *Protein Expression and Purification* 2000;19:212–218. [PubMed: 10833409]

26. Bauminger ER, Harrison PM, Hechel D, Nowik I, Treffry A. Mössbauer spectroscopic investigation of structure-function relations in ferritins. *Biochim. Biophys. Acta* 1991;1118:48–58. [PubMed: 1764477]
27. Sun S, Chasteen ND. Ferroxidase kinetics of horse spleen ferritin. *J. Biol. Chem* 1992;267:25160–25166. [PubMed: 1460015]
28. Duarte EL, Itri R, Lima E Jr, Batista MS, Berquó TS, Goya GF. Large Magnetic Anisotropy in ferrihydrite nanoparticles synthesized from reverse micelles. *Nanotech* 2006;17:5549–5555.
29. Murad E, Schwertmann U. The Mössbauer spectrum of ferrihydrite and its relation to those of other iron oxides. *Am. Min* 1980;65:1043–1048.
30. Pollard RJ, Cardile CM, Lewius DG, Brown LJ. Characterization of FeOOH polymorphs and ferrihydrite using low-temperature, applied-field Mössbauer spectroscopy. *Clay Miner* 1992;27:57–71.
31. Cianchi L, Gulisano F, Spina G. Isotropic relaxation of the hyperfine field and intercluster interactions in ferrihydrite. *J. Phys.: Condens. Matter* 1994;6:2269–2279.
32. Wade VJ, Levi S, Arosio P, Treffry A, Harrison PM, Mann S. Influence of site-directed modifications on the formation of iron cores in ferritin. *J. Mol. Biol* 1991;221:1443–1452. [PubMed: 1942061]
33. Pierre TG St. Chan P, Bauchspiess KR, Webb J, Betteridge S, Walton S, Dickson DPE. Synthesis, structure and magnetic properties of ferritin cores with varying compositions and degrees of structural order: models for iron oxide deposits in iron-overload diseases. *Coord. Chem. Rev* 1996;151:125–143.
34. Mann S, Williams JM, Treffry A, Harrison PA. Reconstituted and native iron cores of bacterioferritin and ferritin. *J. Mol. Biol* 1987;198:405–416. [PubMed: 3123700]
35. Williams JM, Danson PD, Janot C. A Mössbauer determination of the iron core particle size distribution in ferritin. *Phys. Med. Biol* 1978;23:835–851. [PubMed: 715001]
36. Kaufman KS, Papaefthymiou GC, Frankel RB, Rosenthal A. Nature of iron deposits on the cardiac walls in β -thalassemia by Mössbauer spectroscopy. *Biochim. Biophys. Acta* 1980;629:522–529. [PubMed: 7417508]
37. Néel L. Theorie du trainage magnetique des ferromagnetiques en grains fins avec applications aux terres cuites. *Ann. Geophys* 1949;5:99–136.
38. Brown WF Jr. Thermal Fluctuations of a Single-Domain Particle. *Phys. Rev* 1963;130:1677–1686. *J. Appl. Phys* 1963;34:1319–1320. The fundamental theorem of fine-ferromagnetic-particle theory. *J. Appl. Phys* 1968;39:993–994.
39. Aharoni, A. Relaxation Processes in Small Particles. In: Dormann, JL.; Fiorani, D., editors. *Magnetic properties of fine particles*. Elsevier Science; North-Holland: 1991. p. 3
40. Dickson DPE, Reid NMK, Hunt C, Williams HD, El-Hilo M, O'Grady K. Determination of f_0 for fine magnetic particles. *J. Mag. Mag. Mater* 1993;125:345–350.
41. Liui G, Debnath S, Paul KW, Han W, Hausner DB, Hosein H-A, Michel FM, Parise JB, Sparks DL, Strogan DR. Characterization and surface reactivity of ferrihydrite nanoparticles assembled in ferritin. *Langmuir* 2006;22:9313–9321. [PubMed: 17042547]
42. Gleiter H. Materials with ultrafine microstructure: Retrospectives and perspectives. *Nanostruct. Mater* 1992;1:1–19.
43. Coey JM. Noncollinear spin alignment in ultrafine ferrimagnetic crystallites. *Phys. Rev. Lett* 1971;27:1140–1142.
44. Parker FT, Berkowitz AE. Field response of surface spins on Co-adsorbed γ -Fe₂O₃. *Phys. Rev. B* 1991;44:7437–7443.
45. Long, GJ.; Grandjean, F., editors. *Mössbauer Spectroscopy Applied to Magnetism and Materials Science*. Plenum Press; New York: 1993.
46. Brooks RA, Vymazal J, Goldfarb RB, Bulte JW, Aisen P. Relaxometry and magnetometry of ferritin. *Mag. Res. Med* 1998;40:227–235.
47. Frankel RB, Papaefthymiou GC, Watt GD. Variation of superparamagnetic properties with iron loading in mammalian ferritin. *Hyperfine Interact* 1991;66:71–82.
48. Grady, JK. Analytical Ultracentrifugation Studies of the Iron Distributions in Horse Spleen Ferritin. University of New Hampshire; 1998. p. 68M.S. Thesis

49. Mørup S, Topsøe H. Mössbauer studies of thermal excitations in magnetically ordered microcrystals. *Appl. Phys* 1976;11:63–66.
50. Kachkachi H, Bonet E. Surface-induced cubic anisotropy in nanomagnets. *Phys. Rev. B* 2006;73:224402–224409.
51. Kachkachi, H.; Garanin, DA. Magnetic Nanoparticles as Many-Spin Systems; in *Surface Effects in Magnetic Nanoparticles*. In: Fiorani, D., editor. *Book Series in Nanostructure Science and Technology*. Springer; US: 2005. p. 75-104.

Figure 1.

Mössbauer spectra at various temperatures of HuHF (500Fe/protein) oxidized with 100% oxygen atmosphere. The solid lines through the experimental points are least square fits to a superposition of quadrupolar and magnetic iron subsites as indicated by the simulated subspectra. The broken red and blue lines denote the spectra of magnetic subsites 1 and 2, respectively. Solid red and blue lines denote the corresponding quadrupolar subsites 1 and 2. A small amount of quadrupolar contributions are discernible down to 4.2 K.

Figure 2.

Mössbauer spectra at various temperatures of HuHF (500Fe/protein) oxidized with 12 mM hydrogen peroxide. The solid lines through the experimental points are least square fits to a superposition of quadrupolar and magnetic iron subsites as indicated by the simulated subspectra. The broken red and blue lines denote the spectra of magnetic subsites 1 and 2, respectively. Solid red and blue lines denote the corresponding quadrupolar subsites 1 and 2. A small amount of quadrupolar contributions are discernible down to 4.2 K.

Figure 3. Mössbauer spectra at 4.2 K for O_2 (bottom) and H_2O_2 (top) oxidized HuHF (500 Fe/protein) samples with associated hyperfine magnetic field distributions shown on the right. Color scheme for superimposed subspectra is same as in figures 1 and 2.

Figure 4. Magnetic fraction, f , showing sigmoidal temperature dependence, for O₂- (red) and H₂O₂ - oxidized (blue) HuHF 500 Fe/protein. The blocking temperatures are indicated by the arrows, T_B (O₂-oxidized) = 22 K and T_B (H₂O₂-oxidized) = 19 K. Bell shaped curves give derived particle size distributions as indicated on top horizontal scale.

Figure 5. Temperature dependence of the average hyperfine fields at inner and surface iron sites for O₂ (red) and H₂O₂ (blue) oxidized HuHF 500 Fe/protein.

TABLE 1

Mössbauer Parameters for HuHF, 500Fe/protein.

Sample	T (K)	Subsite	δ^a (mm/s) ± 0.03	ΔE_Q^b (mm/s) ± 0.05	Γ^c (mm/s) ± 0.03	$\langle H_{hf} \rangle^d$ (kOe)	DH_{hf}^e (kOe)	Area/ (%) ± 0.1
O ₂ oxidized	120	#1 (inner)	0.46	0.55	0.41	-	-	55.0
	"	#2 (surface)	0.46	1.01	0.43	-	-	45.0
	4.2	#1 (inner)	0.46	0.55	-	-	-	0.3
	"	#2 (surface)	0.46	1.01	0.50	-	-	1.0
	"	#1 (inner)	0.49	-	0.44	486	45	50.7
	"	#2 (surface)	0.46	-	0.47	445	78	48.0
H ₂ O ₂ oxidized	120	#1 (inner)	0.46	0.59	0.41	-	-	59.0
	"	#2 (surface)	0.46	1.04	0.43	-	-	41.0
	4.2	#1 (inner)	0.46	0.61	0.42	-	-	1.0
	"	#2 (surface)	0.46	1.09	0.43	-	-	2.0
	"	#1 (inner)	0.48	-	0.47	478	54	54.0
	"	#2 (surface)	0.45	-	-	436	92	43.0

^a Isomer shifts relative to metallic iron at room temperature.

^b Quadrupole splitting.

^c Full width at half height of the Lorentzian line

^d Hyperfine field.

^e Full width at half maximum of hyperfine field distribution.

^f Relative areas of the subspectra.