



## Application Note AN-T-225

# Analysis of caffeine, pH, and acidity in coffee

Fully automated determination including filtering, reagent addition, and sample pipetting using OMNIS

With the ever-increasing consumption of coffee due to the availability of small home espresso machines, shelf life and consistency of flavor are becoming more important for brand quality in a competitive market. Many of the key factors that influence coffee taste correlate with chemical properties that can be measured. These include pH, titratable acidity, refractive index, and caffeine. Historically, many of

these analyses have included long, manual sample preparation processes using the time-consuming, liquid chromatography (LC) technique. This Application Note looks at a faster, simpler, alternative method for analysis of key quality parameters in coffee using a single titration platform: OMNIS.

## PH AND TITRATABLE ACIDITY

Coffee is primarily acidic, with most roast extracts displaying a pH of approximately five. When coffee is too acidic, it can taste sour and be harsh on the palette. When shifting to the alkaline end of the pH scale, the flavor then becomes bland and lifeless. Different coffee beans require different amounts of roasting, depending on the bean origin and the level of acidity, to achieve the consistent flavor expected from the brand line. By analyzing the pH and acidity of

coffee brewed under consistent conditions, it is possible to judge the final flavor of a roast. This is most beneficial to roasters of large volumes of coffee beans, or to those who supply products with expected flavor profiles (e.g. instant coffee pods). The analysis of pH and acidity in brewed coffee is quite simple and very similar to the procedure used for juices and soft drinks.

**Table 1.** Results of quality parameters in various coffee brews measured with OMNIS.

| Analyte              | Sample 1 | Sample 2 |
|----------------------|----------|----------|
| pH                   | 5.37     | 6.41     |
| Acidity (mg/15 g) *  | 9.9      | 7.1      |
| Caffeine (mg/15 g) * | 120      | 87       |

## CAFFEINE

Unlike the simple sample preparation required for titratable acidity analysis, the analysis of caffeine in brewed coffee is a more intensive process that relies upon several manual preparation steps. Requiring reagent addition (iodine and sulfuric acid), filtration, and accurate sample volume transfer in specifically

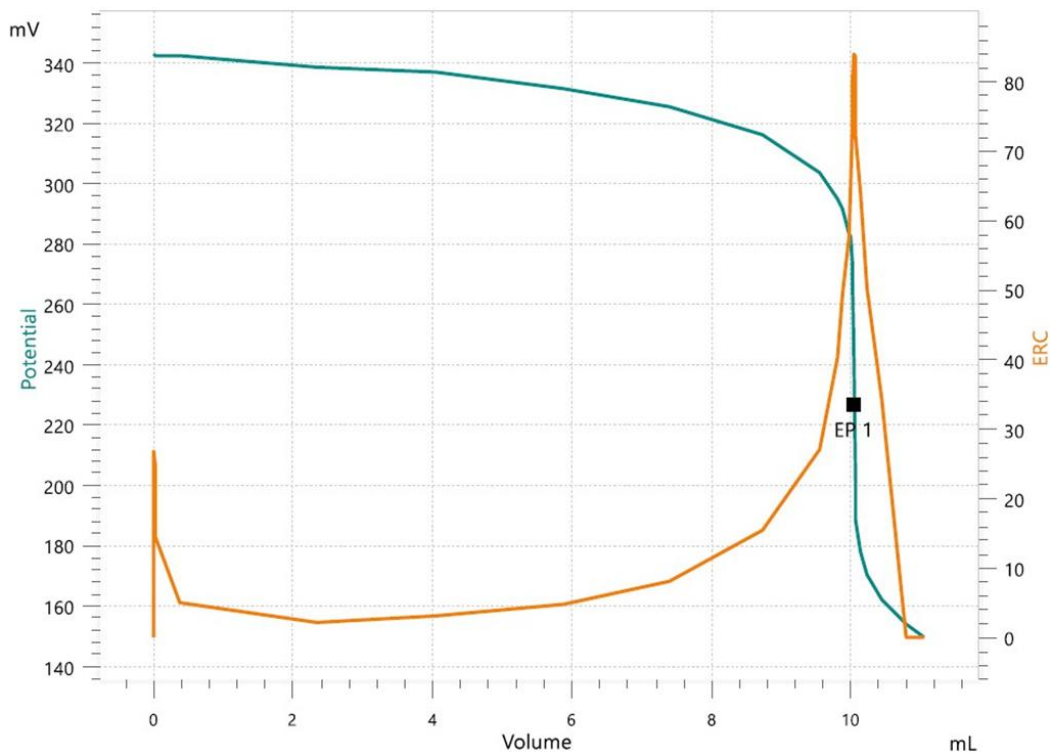
timed steps to provide consistent results, the conventional analysis is very time consuming when performed manually. The flexibility of OMNIS allows for the automation of these steps, eliminating the variability introduced by manual liquid handling and manual timing.



**Figure 1.** OMNIS Robot S with Discover and parallel analysis.

OMNIS automates the entire analysis process with:

- Discover Capping system which keeps samples covered until the time of analysis
- Highly accurate dosing of iodine and acid
- Consistent stirring time for reaction
- Automatic inline filtration
- Highly accurate dosing of sample to titration vessel
- Automatic start of titration
- Automatic cleaning of titration vessel and sample path



**Figure 2.** Figure 2. Example titration curve for caffeine analysis with OMNIS.

## CONCLUSION

Metrohm’s OMNIS titration platform provides the perfect blend of automation and intelligence for the analysis of coffee. Instead of time-consuming manual sample preparation and long analysis times with several different instruments, key coffee quality

parameters can be measured accurately and reliably on a single system.

With OMNIS, you can enjoy your coffee without worrying about your analysis.

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## CONFIGURATION



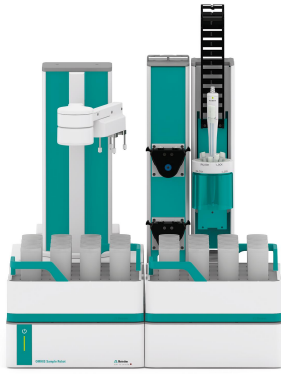
### OMNIS Professional Titrator without stirrer

Innovative, modular potentiometric OMNIS Titrator for endpoint titration and equivalence point titration (monotonic/dynamic). Thanks to 3S Liquid Adapter technology, handling chemicals is safer than ever before. The titrator can be freely configured with measuring modules and cylinder units and can have a stirrer added as needed. Including "Professional" function license for parallel titration with additional titration or dosing modules.

- Control via PC or local network
- Connection option for up to four additional titration or dosing modules for additional applications or auxiliary solutions
- Can be supplemented with magnetic stirrer and/or rod stirrer
- Various cylinder sizes available: 5, 10, 20 or 50 mL
- Liquid Adapter with 3S technology: Safe handling of chemicals, automatic transfer of the original reagent data from the manufacturer

### Measuring modes and software options:

- Endpoint titration: "Basic" function license
- Endpoint and equivalence point titration (monotonic/dynamic): "Advanced" function license
- Endpoint and equivalence point titration (monotonic/dynamic) with parallel titration: "Professional" function license



### OMNIS Sample Robot S Pick and Place

OMNIS Sample Robot S with a "Peristaltic" (2-channel) pump module and a Pick&Place module in addition to extensive accessories for the direct transition to fully automatic titration. The system provides space in two sample racks for 32 sample beakers of 120 mL each. This modular system is supplied completely installed and can thus be put into operation in a very short time.

The system can also be extended upon request to include two additional peristaltic pumps and another Pick&Place module, thus doubling the throughput. If additional workstations are required, then this Sample Robot is already able to be expanded to become an L-sized OMNIS Sample Robot, thus enabling samples from seven racks to be processed in parallel on up to four Pick&Place modules and quadrupling the sample throughput.



### dUnitrode with Pt1000

Digital, combined pH electrode for OMNIS with integrated Pt1000 temperature sensor. This electrode is particularly suitable for :

- pH measurements and titrations in difficult, viscous, or alkaline samples
- at elevated temperatures
- long-term measurements

The fixed ground-joint diaphragm is insensitive to contamination.

Reference electrolyte:  $c(\text{KCl}) = 3 \text{ mol/L}$ , storage in storage solution.

Alternatively: Reference electrolyte for measurements at  $T > 80^\circ\text{C}$ : Idrolyte, storage in Idrolyte.

dTrodes can be used on OMNIS Titrators.



### **dPt Titrode**

Digital, combined platinum ring electrode for OMNIS with a pH glass membrane as reference electrode.

This maintenance-free electrode is suitable for redox titrations when the pH value remains constant, e.g.:

- Iodometry
- Chromatometry
- Cerimetry
- Permanganometry

This electrode is stored in distilled water.

dTrodes can be used on OMNIS Titrators.