Electron Transfer Mechanisms

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# Enhanced Electron Transfer Reactivity of a Nonheme Iron(IV)–Imido Complex as Compared to the Iron(IV)-Oxo Analogue

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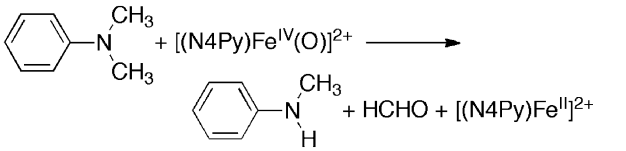
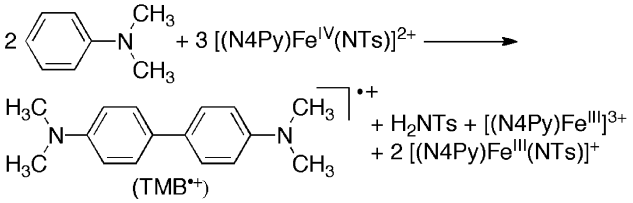
***Abstract:*** *Reactions of N,N-dimethylaniline (DMA) with nonheme iron(IV)-oxo and iron(IV)-tosylimido complexes occur via different mechanisms, such as an N-demethylation of DMA by a nonheme iron(IV)-oxo complex or an electron transfer dimerization of DMA by a nonheme iron(IV)-tosylimido complex. The change in the reaction mechanism results from the greatly enhanced electron transfer reactivity of the iron(IV)-tosylimido complex, such as the much more positive one-electron reduction potential and the smaller reorganization energy during electron transfer, as compared to the electron transfer properties of the corresponding iron-(IV)-oxo complex.*

High-valent metal-oxo and metal-imido complexes have been postulated as active oxidants in oxygen atom and NR group transfer reactions, respectively, by metalloenzymes and bioinspired metal catalysts.[1–3] While extensive studies have been conducted on the reactivities of high-valent metal-oxo complexes over the past several decades,[1,2] much less is known about the reactivities of metal-imido complexes.[2,3] In particular, the chemistry of nonheme iron(IV)-oxo complexes has been well advanced recently by synthesizing a number of biomimetic nonheme iron(IV)-oxo complexes and investigating their reactivities in various oxidation reactions,[1,2] including oxidative N-dealkylation of *N,N*-dimethylanilines (DMA), as well as electrochemical properties (Scheme 1 A).[4] In contrast, only a small number of nonheme iron(IV)-imido complexes have been synthesized, and their chemical properties have been explored less clearly.[5–8] Very recently, an elegant reactivity comparison of nonheme iron-(IV)-oxo versus iron(IV)-imido complexes bearing a common supporting ligand, $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(O)]^{2+}$ and $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$ [N4Py = *N,N*-bis(2-pyridylmethyl)-*N*-bis(2-pyridyl)-methylamine], was reported.[9,10] A contrasting reactivity pattern of the iron(IV)-oxo versus iron(IV)-imido complexes was observed in oxygen atom transfer (OAT) and hydrogen atom transfer (HAT) reactions.[9,10] However, fundamental electron-transfer (ET) properties of nonheme iron(IV)-imido complexes, such as the one-electron reduction potential and the reorganization energy in ET reaction, have never been reported previously. Moreover, the change of reaction mechanism(s) in oxidation reactions by iron(IV)-oxo and iron(IV)-imido complexes has never been demonstrated previously.

A. N-demethylation of *N,N*-dimethylaniline by $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(O)]^{2+}$




B. Dimerization of *N,N*-dimethylaniline by $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$




***Scheme 1.*** Reactions of *N,N*-dimethylaniline by A) nonheme iron(IV)-oxo and B) iron(IV)-imido complexes.

Herein, we report that the reactions of DMA with nonheme iron(IV)-oxo and iron(IV)-tosylimido complexes bearing the same supporting ligand, $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(O)]^{2+}$ (**1**) and $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$ (**2**), occur via quite different mechanisms, such as the N-demethylation of DMA by **1** (Scheme 1 A) and the ET dimerization of DMA by **2** (Scheme 1 B). The drastic change of the reaction mechanism from the N-demethylation of DMA by **1** to the ET dimerization of DMA by **2** results from the enhanced electron transfer reactivity of the iron(IV)-tosylimido complex (**2**), such as the more positive one-electron reduction potential and the smaller reorganization energy in electron transfer, as compared to the electron transfer properties of the iron(IV)-oxo analogue (**1**).

Oxidation of DMA by **1** is known to result in the demethylation of DMA (Scheme 1 A).[4] Interestingly, when

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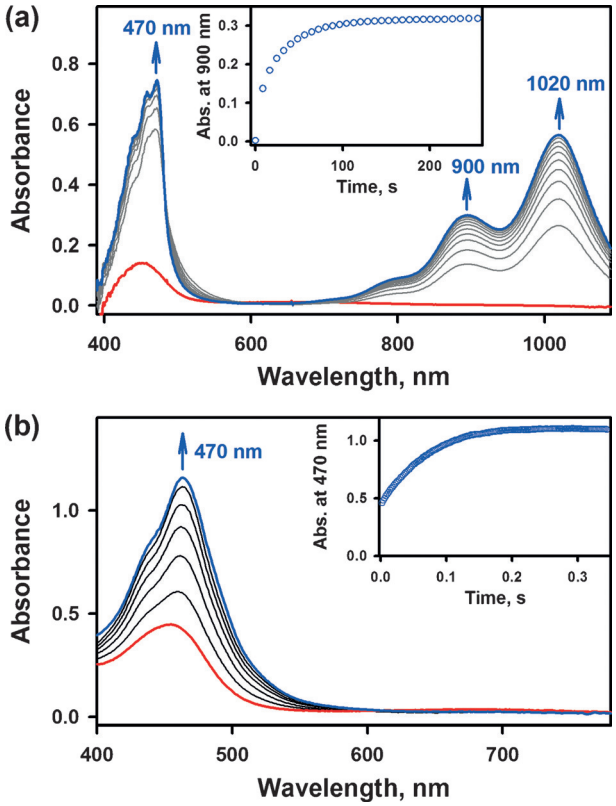
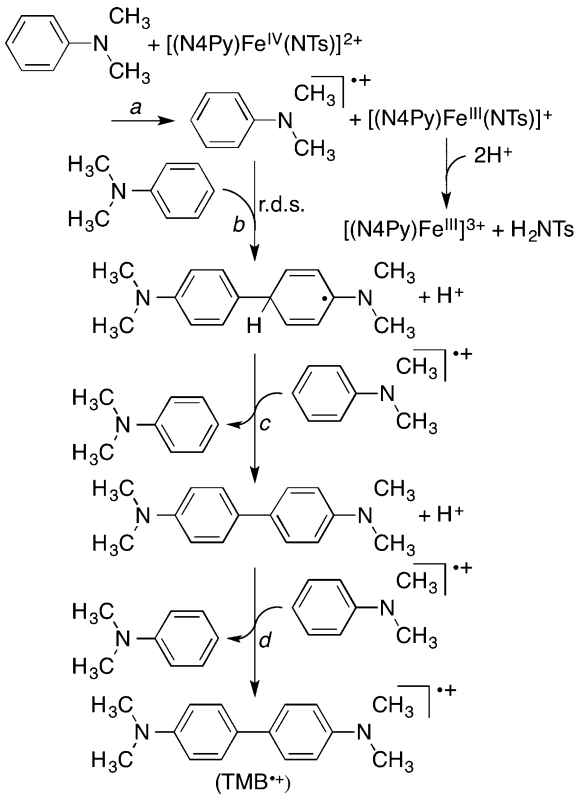



***Figure 1.*** a) Vis-NIR absorption spectral changes in the reaction of $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$ ($5.0\times10^{-2}$ mM) with *N*,*N*-dimethylaniline ($5.0\times10^{-1}$ mM) in $CH_3CN$ at 298 K. Inset shows the time course monitored by absorbance change at 900 nm for the formation of $TMB^{\bullet+}$. b) Absorption spectral changes for the formation of $DMA^{\bullet+}$ observed in the reaction of $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$ (0.125 mM) with DMA (5 equiv, 0.625 mM) in $CH_3CN$ at 298 K. Inset shows the time course monitored by absorbance change at 470 nm for the formation of $DMA^{\bullet+}$.




***Scheme 2.*** Proposed mechanism for the dimerization of *N*,*N*-dimethylaniline by $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$.

**1** was replaced by **2**, the oxidized product of DMA was changed from the demethylated product (Scheme 1 A) to a dimer radial cation (tetramethylbenzidine radical cation ($TMB^{\bullet+}$); Scheme 1 B). The quantitative formation of $TMB^{\bullet+}$ in the reaction of DMA with **2** is shown in Figure 1 a, where the absorption bands at 470, 900, and 1020 nm result from the formation of $TMB^{\bullet+}$.[4b,11] The 2:3 stoichiometry for the reaction of DMA with **2** (Scheme 2 B) was established by the absorption spectral titration (Supporting Information, Figure S1). When the products formed in this reaction were analyzed using EPR, two $Fe^{III}$ species with a high-spin ($S=5/2$) state and a low-spin ($S=1/2$) state, along with $TMB^{\bullet+}$, were observed (Figure S2). The $Fe^{III}$ species were assigned as $[(N4Py)Fe^{III}(NTs)]^{+}$ and $[(N4Py)Fe^{III}]^{3+}$. In addition, the ratio of spin amounts of the $Fe^{III}$ species and $TMB^{\bullet+}$ was determined to be 3:1 by the comparison of the doubly integrated values of the EPR signals (Figure S3). The formation of $H_2NTs$ in Scheme 1 B was also confirmed by the $^1H$ NMR spectrum (Figure S4). $TMB^{\bullet+}$ was formed by the oxidative dimerization of $DMA^{\bullet+}$ ($\lambda_{max}=470$ nm),[11] which was formed by electron transfer from DMA to $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$ (Figure 1 b; Scheme 2, reaction pathway a). Then, the absorption band at 470 nm from $DMA^{\bullet+}$ was changed to those at 470, 900, and 1020 nm bands owing to $TMB^{\bullet+}$ (Figure 1 a; see below).[4b]

Because the formation of $DMA^{\bullet+}$ was immediate upon addition of DMA to a $CH_3CN$ solution of **2**, the reaction was followed using a stopped-flow spectrophotometer, and by monitoring an increase in the absorption band at 470 nm owing to $DMA^{\bullet+}$ (Figure 1 b, inset; see also Figure S5 for comparison with the formation of $TMB^{\bullet+}$). We also determined the second-order rate constant of $1.4\times10^5\,M^{-1}s^{-1}$ for the formation of $DMA^{\bullet+}$ (Figure S6). When DMA was replaced by a deuterated compound (DMA-$(CD_3)_2$ = *N*,*N*-bis(trideuteriomethyl)aniline), no deuterium kinetic isotope effect (KIE = 1.0(1)) was observed, suggesting that the first step of the formation of $DMA^{\bullet+}$ in the reaction of **2** and DMA occurs via an ET mechanism (Figure S6).

The formation of $TMB^{\bullet+}$ was then monitored by an increase in absorbance at 900 nm, and found to obey first-order kinetics (Figure 1 a, inset). The pseudo-first-order rate constant ($k_1$) was proportional to the DMA concentration, affording the second-order rate constant ($k_{et}$) of $1.0(1)\times10^2\,M^{-1}s^{-1}$ (Figure S7). When DMA was replaced by DMA-$(CD_3)_2$, no deuterium kinetic isotope effect was observed (KIE = 1.0(1); Figure S7). This observation is in sharp contrast to the reaction of **1** and DMA, which exhibited a significant kinetic isotope effect owing to a hydrogen atom transfer from the methyl group of DMA to **1**.[4a,c] Furthermore, the formation of $TMB^{\bullet+}$ in the reaction of DMA with **2** was dependent on the DMA concentration (Figure S1), indicating that the rate-determining step is the

C–C bond formation between $DMA^{\bullet+}$ and DMA (Scheme 2, reaction pathway b).

Based on the experimental results described above, we propose the overall mechanism of the DMA oxidation by **2** (Scheme 2). First, electron transfer from DMA to **2** produces $DMA^{\bullet+}$ and $[(N4Py)Fe^{III}(NTs)]^{+}$ (reaction pathway a), followed by the rate-determining C–C bond formation step between $DMA^{\bullet+}$ and DMA to produce a coupling radical product and a proton (reaction pathway b). The coupling radical product is rapidly oxidized by $DMA^{\bullet+}$ to produce TMB and a proton (reaction pathway c). TMB is also readily oxidized by $DMA^{\bullet+}$ to produce $TMB^{\bullet+}$ (reaction pathway d), since the $E_{ox}$ value of TMB (0.32 V vs. SCE)[11] is much lower than that of DMA (0.73 V vs. SCE).[12] Therefore, the overall stoichiometry agrees well with that shown in Scheme 1B. Similarly, the dimerization of triphenylamine (TPA) was observed in the electron transfer oxidation of TPA by **2** to produce a TPA dimer radical cation (Figure S8), with the rate-determining step of the dimerization with TPA (Figure S9).

Then, the one-electron reduction potential of **2** was determined from the electron transfer equilibrium between tris(4-bromophenyl)amine (TBPA) ($E_{ox} = 1.08$ V vs. SCE)[12] and **2**. While no electron transfer from TBPA to **1** ($E_{red} = 0.51$ V vs. SCE)[13] occurs in $CH_3CN$ at 298 K, efficient electron transfer occurs from TBPA to **2** under the same reaction conditions (Figure 2a), where the absorption band at

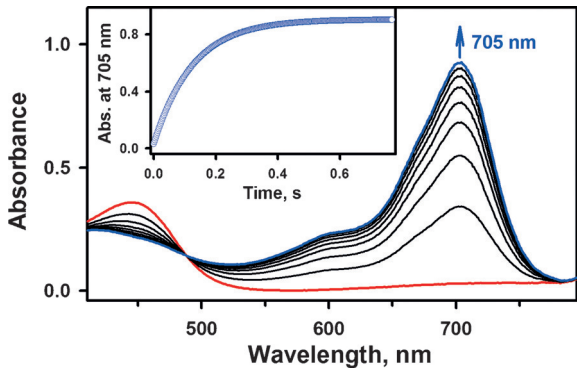



***Figure 2.*** Absorption spectral change for the formation of tris(4-bromophenyl)amine radical cation ($TBPA^{\bullet+}$) produced in electron transfer from TBPA (10 mM) to $[(N4Py)Fe^{IV}(NTs)]^{2+}$ (0.125 mM) in $CH_3CN$ at 298 K. Inset shows the time course monitored by absorbance change at 705 nm.

705 nm is assigned to $TBPA^{\bullet+}$.[14] This result indicates that **2** is a stronger electron acceptor than the corresponding $Fe^{IV}$-oxo complex, **1**. The electron transfer from TBPA to **2** was found to be in equilibrium, where the final concentration of $TBPA^{\bullet+}$ produced increased with increasing initial concentrations of TBPA to reach a constant value (Figure S10). The equilibrium constant ($K_{et}$) was determined to be 0.24 at 298 K (see the Supporting Information, Experimental Section and Figure S11). Then, the one-electron reduction potential ($E_{red}$) of **2** was determined to be $1.04 \pm 0.02$ V vs. SCE from the $K_{et}$ value and the $E_{ox}$ value of TBPA (1.08 V vs. SCE) using the Nernst equation [Eq. (1)], which is much more positive than the reported value of **1** ($E_{red} = 0.51$ V vs. SCE).[13]

$$E_{red} = E_{ox} + (RT/F)\ln K_{et} \quad (1)$$

The $E_{red}$ value of **2** was confirmed by cyclic voltammetry (Figure S12), showing that the one-electron reduction process of **2** was reversible with the $E_{red}$ value of $1.02 \pm 0.02$ V (vs. SCE), which agrees well with the value determined by the redox titration ($1.04 \pm 0.02$ V vs. SCE). The large difference in the $E_{red}$ values between **1** and **2** results in the drastic change in the mechanisms of the reactions of DMA with **1** and **2**, because the $E_{ox}$ value of DMA (0.73 V vs. SCE) is higher than the $E_{red}$ value of **1** (0.51 V vs. SCE)[13] but lower than the $E_{red}$ value of **2** ($1.04 \pm 0.02$ V vs. SCE). In such a case, electron transfer from DMA to **1** is highly exergonic when hydrogen atom transfer rather than electron transfer occurs for the N-demethylation (Scheme 1A), whereas electron transfer from DMA to **2** occurs for the formation of $TMB^{\bullet+}$ (Scheme 1B and Scheme 2).

Rates of electron transfer from TBPA to **2** were determined from the rise in the absorption band at 705 nm due to $TBPA^{\bullet+}$ (Figure 2). The electron transfer rates obeyed pseudo-first-order kinetics in the presence of a large excess of TBPA (Figure 2, inset). The pseudo-first-order rate constants ($k_{obs}$) increased linearly with increasing concentration of TBPA (Figure S13), and the second-order rate constant of the electron transfer ($k_{et}$) was determined from the slope of the linear plot of $k_{obs}$ versus concentration of TBPA to be $8.5 \times 10^2\,M^{-1}s^{-1}$. Similarly, the $k_{et}$ values of electron transfer from a series of arylamine derivatives to **2** were determined, and the $k_{et}$ values are listed in Table S1 (see also Figure S13), together with the $E_{ox}$ values of arylamine derivatives and the driving force of electron transfer, which was determined using [Eq. (2)], where $e$ is the elementary charge.

$$-\Delta G_{et}\,(eV) = e(E_{red} - E_{ox}) \quad (2)$$

The driving force dependence of the electron transfer rate constants is shown in Figure 3, where the $\log k_{et}$ values are plotted against the $-\Delta G_{et}$ values. The driving force dependence of $k_{et}$ is well fitted by the solid line in Figure 3, in light of the Marcus theory of adiabatic outer-sphere electron transfer [Eq. (3)],

$$k_{et} = Z\exp[-(\lambda/4)(1 + \Delta G_{et}/\lambda)^2/k_B T] \quad (3)$$

where $Z$ is the collision frequency taken as $1 \times 10^{11}\,M^{-1}s^{-1}$, $\lambda$ is the reorganization energy of electron transfer, $k_B$ is the Boltzmann constant, and $T$ is the absolute temperature.[15,16] The $\lambda$ value is determined to be 1.89 eV as the best fit value of [Eq. (3)], and this value is significantly smaller than that of **1** (2.74 eV).[13] The $\log k_{et}$ value of the reactions of DMA with **2** (number 5 in Figure 3) agrees with the Marcus line with $\lambda = 1.89$ eV for the electron transfer from arylamine derivatives to **2**.

The higher $E_{red}$ value of **2** than that of **1** was supported by the density functional theory (DFT) calculations at the CAM-B3LYP/6-311G(d) level of theory (Supporting Information),[17,18] which shows that the LUMO level of **2** ($S = 1$) was 0.4 eV lower than that of **1** ($S = 1$; Figure S14). The bond reorganization energies of electron transfer ($\lambda_i$) of

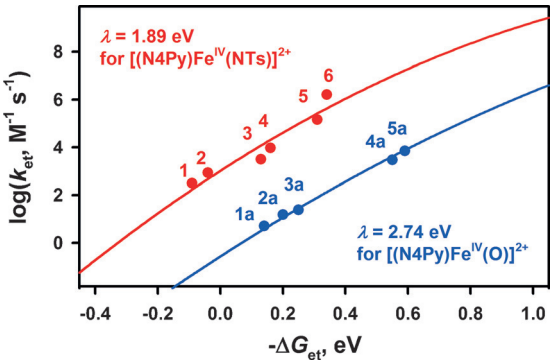



***Figure 3.*** a) Plots of log$k_{et}$ of electron transfer from arylamines [1: 4-CN-DMA; 2: (4-Br-$C_6H_4$)$_3$N (=TBPA); 3: ($C_6H_5$)$_3$N (=TPA); 4: 4-Br-DMA; 5: DMA; and 6: 4-Me-DMA] to [(N4Py)Fe$^{IV}$(NTs)]$^{2+}$ (red circles) in $CH_3CN$ at 298 K vs. the driving force of the electron transfer. b) Plots of log$k_{et}$ of electron transfer from ferrocene derivatives [1a: ferrocene; 2a: *n*-amyl ferrocene; 3a: dimethylferrocene; 4a: octamethylferrocene; and 5a: decamethylferrocene] to [(N4Py)Fe$^{IV}$(O)]$^{2+}$ (blue circles) in $CH_3CN$ at 298 K vs. the driving force of the electron transfer.[13] The fitting to the Marcus theory of the electron transfer are shown by the red line with $\lambda = 1.89$ eV and blue line with $\lambda = 2.74$ eV.

**2**/[(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(NTs)]$^+$ and **1**/[(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(O)]$^+$ were also evaluated by using the density DFT calculations.[19] The $\lambda_i$ value of **2**/[(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(NTs)]$^+$ was estimated to be 0.72 eV as an energy difference between the optimized structure of **2** ($S=1$) and the optimized structure of [(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(NTs)]$^+$ ($S=1/2$; Figure S15). This value is 1.58 eV smaller than the corresponding $\lambda_i$ value of **1** ($S=1$)/[(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(O)]$^+$ ($S=1/2$).[20] The difference in the $\lambda$ value (0.85 eV) observed in the one-electron reduction processes of **2** ($\lambda = 1.89$ eV) and **1** ($\lambda = 2.74$ eV) corresponds to about one-half of the difference in the $\lambda_i$ values (1.58 eV) of electron exchanges of **2** ($S=1$)/[(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(NTs)]$^+$ ($S=1/2$) and **1** ($S=1$)/[(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(O)]$^+$ ($S=1/2$; Table S2). The smaller $\lambda$ value of **2** than that of **1** may result due to the smaller change in the bond lengths by the ET reduction of **2**.

In conclusion, we have shown that a nonheme iron(IV)-tosylimido complex, [(N4Py)Fe$^{IV}$(NTs)]$^{2+}$ (**2**), acts as a much stronger electron acceptor than the corresponding iron(IV)-oxo complex, [(N4Py)Fe$^{IV}$(O)]$^{2+}$ (**1**), but a one-electron reduced complex, [(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(NTs)]$^+$, acts as a much weaker base than the corresponding iron(III)-oxo complex, [(N4Py)Fe$^{III}$(O)]$^+$. Such differences in the redox and acid–base properties resulted in the drastic change in the reaction mechanisms from the N-demethylation of DMA by [(N4Py)Fe$^{IV}$(O)]$^{2+}$ (**1**) via hydrogen atom transfer to the electron transfer dimerization of DMA by [(N4Py)Fe$^{IV}$-(NTs)]$^{2+}$ (**2**) to form TMB$^{\bullet+}$ product.

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