

Excited State Redox Chemistry of Polypyridyl Chromium(III) Complexes. A Determination of the Chromium(III)–(II) Self-Exchange Rate [1]

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Received March 20, 1979

Ultraviolet excitations of polypyridyl chromium(III) complexes in alcoholic or aqueous alkaline media have been found to result in formation of chromium(II) complexes apparently in competition with formation of the thermally equilibrated ²E chromium(III) excited state. The upper state process probably involves oxidation of solvent species and can be used as a device for generating very reactive chromium(II) polypyridyl complexes. By selective excitation of one polypyridyl complex in the presence of a second, the Cr(PP)₃^{3+,2+} self-exchange rate has been investigated and found to be approximately diffusion controlled. This is consistent with the self-exchange rate inferred from the very rapid reactions of other metal complexes with chromium polypyridyl species.

Introduction

The photochemistry of transition metal polypyridyl (PP) complexes has been rich and varied, owing largely to the relatively long excited state lifetimes and to the redox lability of these systems [2–7]. Such complexes have been the focus of recent interest because the lowest thermally equilibrated excited states are often 1–2 eV more powerful as oxidizing or/and reducing agents than the respective ground states. Thus the lowest energy excited states of M(PP)₃ⁿ⁺ complexes have been used to oxidize or reduce a variety of organic and inorganic substrates, generally with a view of studying highly exergonic reactions or with attempting to make use of the chemical energy contained in displaced redox equilibria.

In the course of our studies of Cr(PP)₃³⁺ complexes we have found that some of the redox behavior impli-

cates solvent species. Thermal [8–10] and photochemical [11] oxidations of solvent species by polypyridyl and related complexes are often mechanistically complex, but reasonably commonplace [12]. In this note we report our investigations of this behavior and explore some of its implications.

Experimental

The chromium(III) complexes were prepared by H₂O₂ oxidations of a mixture of Cr²⁺ and polypyridyl ligand in methanol in a minor variation of the literature procedure [13]. Most other complexes were available from previous studies at Wayne State University.

The [Co(sep)]Cl₃ [14] was prepared by a variation of the procedure of Sargeson and co-workers [15]. A solution of [Co(en)₃]Cl₃ in formalin was allowed to stand overnight, then concentrated at room temperature. When a precipitate began to form the mixture was cooled in an ice bath and the supernatant liquid was decanted. The residue was mixed with methanol, cooled in the ice bath, and ammonia gas was bubbled through the mixture for about half an hour. The crystalline product was separated by filtration and purified by recrystallization from water.

Flash photolysis systems and techniques were very similar to those described previously [16]. The pulse radiolysis system and techniques have also been described previously [17]. Rate constants based on absorbance decays were calculated from the slopes of first order plots where possible.

Stopped flow studies were performed using Aminco and Durrum apparatuses at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Fischer Certified A.C.S. reagent grade 2-propanol and t-butanol were used in most of these experiments. In addition some flash photolysis experiments were carried out using purified alcohols. Fischer reagent grade 2-propanol was distilled and a sample with a boiling point of (82.29 ± 0.03) °C at 756 Torr

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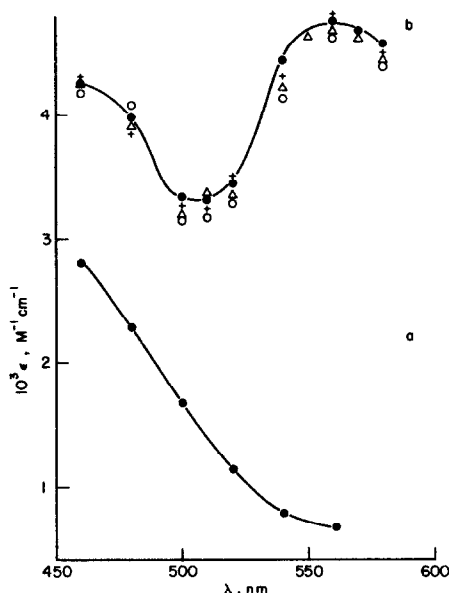


Fig. 1. Spectra of the transients obtained under different conditions: a) Spectra of the 2E for $Cr(bpy)_3^{3+}$ in acid ($HClO_4$ 0.1 M) deaerated solutions. Photolysis cut off: $\lambda \geq 380$ nm; $(r(bpy)_3^{3+})$: 5×10^{-5} M, energy/flash 250 Joule. Deaerated solution. Extinctions have been calculated from the initial absorbance and the initial concentration of 2E . The initial concentration of 2E was made equal to the initial concentration of $Cr(bpy)_3^{2+}$ obtained under the same conditions but from a total quenching of the excited state with Fe^{2+} (0.01 M). b) Spectra of the Species generated with various quenchers. $\bullet$ Fe^{2+} : 0.02 M; $HClO_4$: 0.1 M; deaerated; Δ $Ru(NH_3)_6^{2+}$: 10^{-3} M; $HClO_4$: 0.1 M; deaerated; $+$ NaOH: 0.16 M; aerated; $\circ$ Neat methanol: deaerated; $Cr(bpy)_3^{3+}$: 5×10^{-5} M and energy/flash: 250 Joule in all these experiments. The spectra in methanol were obtained 500 μ sec after the flash. Both the spectra obtained in NaOH and in MeOH have been normalized under the assumption that the extinction coefficient at 560 nm is $4786 M^{-1} cm^{-1}$.

was used for some experiments and t-butanol recrystallized three times by partial freezing was used in others. The results obtained were unaffected by these solvent purifications.

Solutions of $Co(sep)^{2+}$ were prepared by means of the zinc amalgam reduction of aqueous solutions of $[Co(sep)]Cl_3$ (0.09 M NaCl, 0.01 M HCl). All solutions were carefully deaerated, except where otherwise noted, by entrained, purified N_2 or Ar. In the flash photolysis studies of $Cr(bpy)_3^{3+}$ kinetics, optical monitoring was performed using a cutoff filter so that only light of $\lambda > 500$ nm traversed the sample cell. Cutoff filter solutions were also placed in the outer jacket of the sample cell as needed to isolate various optical regions.

Formaldehyde was determined with chromotropic acid [19].

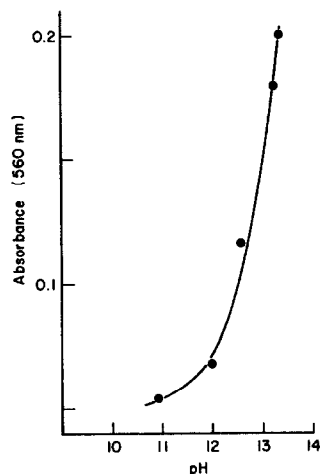


Fig. 2. Variations of the transient concentration with base. Absorptions at 560 nm were determined 300 μ sec after the flash. $Cr(bpy)_3^{3+}$: 5×10^{-5} M; energy/flash: 250 Joule; $[NaOH] + [NaClO_4] = 0.2$ M; cut off filter transmitted $\lambda \geq 320$ nm.

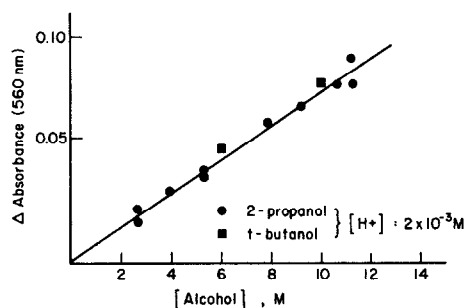


Fig. 3. Dependence of the Cr(II) yield on 2-propanol and t-butanol concentrations. Absorbance increase at 560 nm produced in flash photolyses of $Cr(bpy)_3^{3+}$ deaerated solutions containing 2×10^{-3} M $HClO_4$ and various alcohol concentrations. Cut off filters transmitted at $\lambda > 320$ nm. Absorbances were determined at about 300 μ s after the photolysis flash; Cr(II) absorbancies were relatively stable in the alcoholic media.

Results and Discussion

Flash photolyses of $Cr(bpy)_3^{3+}$ in aqueous solutions produce a strongly absorbing transient whose spectra, lifetime, and identification as the thermally equilibrated 2E excited state have been previously discussed by other authors [5e, 5f, 6]. In deaerated basic aqueous media and in deaerated alcoholic media we have found flash photolyses to produce a different, strongly absorbing, and very reactive species, with an absorbance maximum at about 560 nm (Fig. 1). This species was frequently produced together with the 2E transient during the photolysis flash. The yield of this second species was dependent on the solution pH (Fig. 2), the excitation wavelength

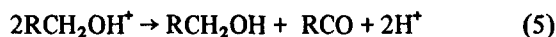
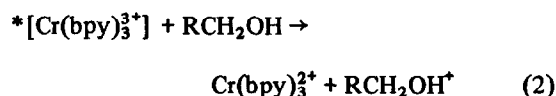
TABLE I. Relative Yields of $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ Produced in Flash Photolyses of $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ in Neat Methanol.

Wavelength Region Irradiated, nm	$\Delta A_{560 \text{ nm}}$	Excitation Range, nm	$\Delta A_{560}(\text{corr})^a$
>200	0.30	200–260	0.57
>260	0.20	260–320	0.40
>320	0.06	320–430	0.09
>430	0.02	>430	0.02

^a Values corrected for an approximate light distribution using $\text{Co}(\text{NH}_3)_5\text{Br}^{2+}$; $[\text{Br}_2^-]$ was measured for excitation in the same regions, see ref. 21a. Substrate absorbance was effectively zero at 560 nm.

(Table I), and alcohol concentration (Fig. 3). This chemical species had absorption spectra and the chemical reactivity characteristic of $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$ [13, 18]. We have made direct comparisons of reactivity and spectra under our experimental conditions by generating $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ in reductive quenching of $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ with Fe^{2+} , $\text{Ru}(\text{NH}_3)_6^{2+}$, etc. (Fig. 1). Under conditions of moderate pH or concentration of alcohol we have been able to detect both the $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ transient and $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$. Other polypyridyl complexes of chromium (III) behave similarly, and we have found that the $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{PP})_3^{3+}$ lifetime is not strongly medium dependent under such conditions (refs. 53, 5f, 6b and Table II); however the ^2E yield is medium dependent under these conditions. These observations indicate that the chromium(II) complex is produced from relatively high energy excited states, *not from the $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{PP})_3^{3+}$ state*. By analogy with previous studies [11, 16, 20] it seems plausible that the solvent dependent process leading to $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$ is a prompt, upper state process

which occurs in competition with excited state relaxation to form the $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ transient, as in eqns. (1)–(5)* [21]:



The alcohol radicals (written as ROH^* in eqn. (2)) could in principle be involved in attack on the substrate; however, no spectroscopic anomalies such as shifted absorbance maxima or very short lived transient absorbance changes were observed which would require such reactions. In anaerobic methanol solutions we found the $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$ yield to be (2.1 ± 0.3) of the yield of CH_2O as required by (1)–(5).

Reaction (2) provides a device for investigating the $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}/\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$ self-exchange reaction. Deaerated methanolic solutions $1.0 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ in $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ were flash photolyzed with the flash adjusted so that $10^{-6} \text{ M} \leq [\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}] \leq 5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ M}$. The $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ produced in this manner was found to exhibit stable absorbances for periods of several

An alternative mechanism might be H-atom abstraction from the solvent such as has recently been reported for the 1,10-phenanthroline $\pi\pi^$ excited state oxidations of organic solvents and water [22]. However this process has not been observed for coordinated polypyridyls where the nitrogen atom is relatively inaccessible.

TABLE II. Lifetime of the ^2E Excited State of $\text{Cr}(\text{PP})_3^{3+}$.

$t_{1/2}^a$ (μsec)	Medium Conditions ^b
60 ± 5	6.6 M 2-propanol; $2.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M HClO}_4$
65 ± 5	6.6 M 2-propanol; $2.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M HClO}_4$; 3 M NaClO_4
70 ± 5	6.6 M 2-propanol; $2.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M HClO}_4$; 6 M NaClO_4
60 ± 5	-----; $2.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M HClO}_4$; -----
120 ± 6	-----; $2.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M HClO}_4$; 6 M NaClO_4
120 ± 5^c	0.05 M H_2SO_4
120 ± 5^c	$10^{-5} \text{ M H}_2\text{SO}_4$
118 ± 5^c	pH 6.5
100 ± 10^c	0.1 M NaOH

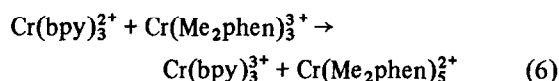
^a Average over 5 determinations; for $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{bipy})_3^{3+}$ except as indicated. ^b Solutions deaerated with Ar. ^c For $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{5-Cl-phen})_3^{3+}$; decay rates were independent of wavelength of observation ($460 \text{ nm} < \lambda < 580 \text{ nm}$). Half-lives based on observations of the decay of the 520 nm absorbance.

TABLE III. Rate Constants for Oxidation–Reduction Reactions of Polypyridyl–Chromium(III) Complexes.

Oxidant	Medium	$10^6 [\text{Reductant}]_0$	$k_I, \text{s}^{-1} \text{ }^a$	$k_{II}, \text{M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$
$\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{3+}$	Methanol (~99%)	1.6^b	1.0 ± 0.3	6.2×10^5
		2.5^b	1.7 ± 0.3	6.8×10^5
		4.3^b	3.0 ± 0.2	7.0×10^5
	$7 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M HCl};$ ~95% Methanol	$\sim 2^b$	$(1.4 \pm 0.4) \times 10^2$	$(7.0 \pm 0.5) \times 10^7$
	$0.05 \text{ M HCl};$ ~95% Methanol	$\sim 2^b$	$(7.1 \pm 0.8) \times 10^2$	$(3.5 \pm 0.3) \times 10^8$
$\text{Ru}(\text{NH}_3)_6^{3+} \text{ }^d$	$0.1 \text{ M HCl};$ ~90% Methanol	$\sim 2^b$	$(1.9 \pm 0.1) \times 10^2$	$(9.6 \pm 0.3) \times 10^8$
	0.1 M HClO_4			$(1.4 \pm 0.4) \times 10^9$
	$0.03 \text{ M H}_2\text{SO}_4$	$\sim 2^e$		$(0.7 \pm 0.07) \times 10^{9d}$
$\text{Cr}(\text{Mephen})_3^{3+}$	$0.09 \text{ M NaCl};$ 0.01 M HCl	$(\sim 30)^e$	$(1.1 \pm 0.1) \times 10^2 \text{ }^f$	$(2.2 \pm 0.2) \times 10^5$
	$0.09 \text{ M NaCl};$ 0.01 M HCl	$(\sim 30)^e$	$(4 \pm 1) \times 10^2 \text{ }^g$	$(3 \pm 1) \times 10^5$

^a Average and average deviation of 3–6 determinations. ^b Initial concentration of $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ produced in each flash from selective excitation and photoredox of $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ in methanol. ^c Generated in the $\text{Ru}(\text{NH}_3)_6^{2+}$ quenching of $(^2\text{E})\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ in flash photolysis experiments; second order decay conditions. Rate constants estimated using extinction coefficients for $\text{Cr}(\text{PP})_3^{2+}$ (e.g., see Fig. 1). ^d For reaction of $\text{Ru}(\text{NH}_3)_6^{3+}$ with $\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{2+}$. ^e $\text{Co}(\text{sep})^{2+}$ reactions determined by stopped flow techniques. ^f $[\text{Cr}(\text{Mephen})_3^{3+}]_0 = 0.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$. ^g $[\text{Cr}(\text{Mephen})_3^{3+}]_0 = 1.4 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$.

seconds [22]. When the flash photolyses were performed in the presence of $5 \times 10^{-8} \text{ M}$ to 10^{-7} M $\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{3+}$, we observed a pseudo first order transient decay of $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$ absorbance at 560 nm. In separate experiments we have found $\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{3+}$ to have an absorption maximum at about 470 nm and in the near red, with an absorption minimum at ~560 nm. Consequently, the transient absorbance in these experiments is attributed to $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$ and its decay is attributed to reaction (6). There is a -0.08 V difference in the $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+,2+}$ and $\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{3+,2+}$ electrode potentials [23], so that $K_5 = 0.044$ for eq. (6):



Our observations, summarized in Table III, demonstrate that the rate of reaction (6) increases as expected with ionic strength in methanol, and that $k_5 = (9.6 \pm 0.3) \times 10^8 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ or (for $\Delta G^\circ \cong 0$) [24, 25] $k_{\text{ex}} \cong (4 \pm 1) \times 10^9 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ (methanolic solution, 25°C , $\mu = 0.1$). This is close to the diffusional limit expected [26] in this medium. It is in very good agreement with the value of $k_{\text{ex}} \cong (2 \pm 1) \times 10^9 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ based on the $\text{Co}(\text{sep})^{2+}$ reduction of

**For this reaction in aqueous solutions: $K_{12} \cong 15 \pm 4$ (based on a value of $\Delta E^\circ = +0.07 \text{ V}$; potentials determined at Brookhaven National Laboratory by B. Brunschwig and by G. M. Brown), $f_{12} = 0.93$ and $k_{\text{Co}} = k_{11} = 2.8 \pm 0.8 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ (at $\mu = 0.1$, based on the value of $k_{11} = 5.2 \pm 0.3 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ at $\mu = 0.2$ reported in ref. 16). We would estimate $k_{\text{ex}} > 10^9 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ using $k_{\text{Ru}} = k_{22} = 4.3 \times 10^3 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$.

$\text{Cr}(\text{Mephen})_3^{3+}$ [24, 25], and in reasonable agreement with the nearly diffusion controlled $\text{Ru}(\text{NH}_3)_6^{3+}/\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{2+}$ reaction [27].

Reaction (6) was also studied by pulse radiolysis. Solutions of $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+}$ ($5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$) in 1 M *t*-butanol and 10^{-4} M HClO_4 were deaerated with nitrogen. Various concentrations of $\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{3+}$ were used in order to see the previous reaction. A rate constant $k = 3 \times 10^3 \text{ sec}^{-1}$ was obtained with $\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{3+} = 10^{-3} \text{ M}$; thus $k_5 \cong 3 \times 10^6 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ and $k_{\text{ex}} \cong 7 \times 10^7 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{sec}^{-1}$ (aqueous medium, 25°C , $\mu \cong 0.01$). However attempts to use higher concentrations of $\text{Cr}(\text{Me}_2\text{phen})_3^{3+}$ produced new transients whose origin is probably in secondary $\text{Cr}(\text{III})$ –ligand–radical reactions.

Conclusions

(a) High energy excitations of $\text{Cr}(\text{PP})_3^{3+}$ complexes can lead to chromium(II) species in basic and alcoholic media. This kind of solvent dependent photoredox process has now been found for a variety of coordination complexes [12, 13, 18] and may be a contributing factor to excited state quenching by solvolytic species, especially at large excitation energies.

(b) The $\text{Cr}(\text{bpy})_3^{3+,2+}$ self-exchange (electron transfer) rate is very nearly diffusion limited.

Acknowledgments

Partial support of this research at Wayne State University by the National Science Foundation (CHE

76-00429) and the National Institutes of Health (AM 14341) is gratefully acknowledged. Research at the Radiation Laboratory University of Notre Dame was supported by the Division of Basic Energy Sciences of the Department of Energy; this is document No. NDRL-1874 from the Notre Dame Radiation Laboratory. Research performed at Brookhaven National Laboratory under contract with the U.S. Department of Energy and supported by its Division of Basic Energy Sciences. The authors are indebted to Dr. Bruce Brunschwig for expert assistance with the stopped flow studies.

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- Abbreviations: bpy = 2,2'-bipyridyl; Me₂phen = 5,6-dimethyl-1,10-phenanthroline; Mephen = 5-methyl-1,10-phenanthroline; 5-Cl-phen = 5-chloro-1,10-phenanthroline; sep = sepulchrate = 1,3,6,8,10,13,16,19-octaazabicyclo[6.6.6.]icosane.
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