RUTHENIUM(III)-CATALYSED OXIDATION OF SECONDARY ALCOHOLS BY N-METHYLMORPHOLINE N-OXIDE (NMO)

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Summary

A catalytic amount of $RuCl₃$ in the presence of excess of N-methylmorphohne N-oxide (NMO) in DMF oxidizes secondary alcohols to ketones. Spectral studies reveal the formation of a $Ru(V)$ -oxo species which is formed *in situ* on adding N-oxide. The formation of Ru(V) has been established by cychc voltammetric studies. The mechamsm mvolves the formation of $Ru(V)$ -oxo species in steady state concentrations from $Ru(III)$ and NMO, and this in turn reacts with the substrate in the rate-determining step.

Introduction

Ruthemum(III)-catalysed oxidations of alcohols have been reported using t-butyl hydroperoxide [1] and iodosylbenzene [2]. Yield-oriented studies have been carried out using several N-oxides to oxidize geramol, cholestanol, etc. in the presence of ruthenium (III) [3]. In all these cases, N-oxides act as two-electron oxidants. In the case of metalloporphyrms, metals such as manganese undergo a change in the oxidation state m addition to complexing with the N-oxide $[4]$. N-methylmorpholine N-oxide has been used as a secondary oxidant in conjunction with $OsO₄$ for the oxidation of steroids $[5]$ and for the cis hydroxylations of olefins $[6, 7]$. The oxidation of allyhc alcohols [8, 91 by the ruthemum(III)-molecular oxygen system is quite slow, and requires high pressure and temperature There are no significant reports on the kinetics and mechanism of oxidation of secondary alcohols using a ruthenum(III) N -oxide system. The oxidation of cyclohexanol, 1-phenylethanol and 2-propanol by N -methylmorpholine N -oxide m DMF solvent in the presence of ruthemum(II1) is reported m this paper. A mechanism is proposed based on spectral, electrochemical and kinetic investigations.

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Expernnental

Materials

N-methylmorpholme N-oxide monohydrate (Fluka) was used as recelved. All the secondary alcohols (Merck) were purified according to standard procedures. $RuCl₃·3H₂O$ (Johnson Matthey) was used as received DMF was purified according to the method of Faulkner [10].

Procedure and methods

Measurements of electronic spectra were carried out using a Shimadzu Spectrophotometer. EPR spectra were recorded at liquid nitrogen temperature using a Varian spectrometer. Cychc voltammetric studies were carried out with a Princeton Applied Research Model 173, 175 and 179 electrochemistry system equipped with an X-Y recorder. Voltammograms were obtained with sweep rates of $100 - 400$ mV s⁻¹. Product analysis was carried out with GLC The RuCl₃ used was the β -form, as confirmed by X-ray diffraction studies. Ru(III) was standardized by the method of Horiuchi [11]. Dilute solutions of ruthemum(III) were estimated by the thiourea method [12], the thiourea complex of ruthenium absorbing at 610 nm. All the kinetic studies were carried out at 35 ± 0.1 °C. The concentration of NMO remaining at any instant was determined titanometrically as reported earlier [13]. However, for concentrations of NMO less than 0 05 M the titanometric method was not satisfactory, the ketone formed from the alcohol was therefore converted to the correspondmg 2,4-dmltrophenylhydrazone and its concentration determined spectrophotometrically by the method of Lappin $[14]$ The amount of ketone formed as determined spectrophotometrically corresponded to the amount of NM0 consumed. At all concentrations a stoichlometry of 1:1 between the substrate and N -oxide in the presence of catalytic amounts of RuCl₃ was established.

Results and discussion

Cyclohexanol, 1-phenylethanol and 2-propanol are oxidized by NM0 in the presence of $RuCl₃$ as catalyst to the corresponding ketones. There is no uncatalysed reaction. When the concentration of the substrate 1s kept at a constant large value, a plot of log[NMO] *uersus* time 1s linear for all the three alcohols, thereby showing that the order m NM0 1s unity. Pseudofirst-order plots to show the effect of varying the concentration of NM0 for a representative alcohol, viz cyclohexanol, are given in Fig. 1. From the pseudo-first-order rate constants (k') the orders with respect to the catalyst and the substrate (high concentrations, [substrate] > 0.5 M) are determined to be one (Fig. 2) and zero respectively (Table 1). The order with respect to the substrate is fractional at low concentrations $(0.05 \cdot 0.2 \text{ M}, \text{Fig. 3}).$

The observed orders could be accounted for by the Schemes 1 - 3. The three Schemes and the correspondmg rate expressions are given below:

Fig 1 Pseudo-fust-order plots to show the effect of varying the concentration of NM0 for RuC13-catalysed oxldatlon of a representative substrate, uzz cyclohexanol

Fig 2 Determination of order with respect to the catalyst, RuCl₃ for (a) 1-phenyl**ethanol, (h) cyclohexanol and (c) 2-propanol**

Determination of the orders with respect to the reactants at high concentrations of the substrate, temperature 35 ± 0 1 °C, solvent DMF

 $a_k' =$ Pseudo-first-order rate constant ($[S] \geq [NMO]$) (For *k'* the correlation factor varies **from 0 990 to 0 999)**

 $**k**₁$ **= Overall second-order rate constant**

$$
Ru(III) + S \xrightarrow{K} \text{complex}
$$

complex + NMO \xrightarrow{h} products
Scheme 1

Considering the complex to be in equilibrium with the reactants and expressing $[Ru(III)]_{\text{free}}$ in terms of $[Ru(III)]_{\text{total}}$, the rate expression (1) is obtamed.

TABLE 1

Fig 3 Determination of order with respect to the substrates at low concentrations

rate =
$$
\frac{kK[S][NMO][Ru(III)]_T}{1 + K[S]}
$$
(1)
Ru(III) + NMO $\xrightarrow[k_{-1}$ [Ru(III) ... NMO]
complex
complex + S $\xrightarrow{k_2}$ products
Scheme 2

Using the steady-state approxlmatlon to express the concentration of the complex, the rate expression (2) is obtamed

rate =
$$
\frac{k_1 k_2 [\text{Ru(III)}][\text{NMO}][\text{S}]}{k_{-1} + k_2 [\text{S}]}
$$
 (2)
Ru(III) + NMO $\underset{k_{-1}}{\overset{k_2}{\underset{k_{-1}}{\rightleftharpoons}}} Ru^{+n}$
Ru⁺ⁿ + S $\overset{k_2}{\longrightarrow}$ products
Scheme 3

If the steady-state approximation is used to express the concentration of Ru^{+n} $(n > 3)$, the rate expression (2) is obtained.

The assumption of a fast prior equilibrium step in mechanisms 2 and 3 leads to the rate expression (3).

$$
rate = \frac{k_2 K[S][NMO][Ru(III)]_T}{1 + k[NMO]}
$$
 (3)

Rate expression (3) does not account for the fractional order m the substrate. Also, one would expect the order with respect to NM0 to be a variable, being zero at high concentrations and one at low concentrations. In the range of concentrations studied, the order with respect to NM0 is always unity. There is no spectral change when alcohol alone is added to Ru(III). From the titanometric method of estimation of NM0 [13] before and after adding $RuCl₃$, it is found that $RuCl₃$ undergoes a change of oxidation state. These results rule out Schemes 1 and 2.

Electronic spectral studies have been carried out m order to discover the nature of the intermediate formed during the course of the reaction between $Ru(III)$ and NMO. $RuCl₃$ in DMF has an absorption maximum at 405 nm (Fig. 4a, $\epsilon = 7041 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$), with a shoulder appearing at 450 nm $(\epsilon = 6122 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1})$. Absorption at 405 nm can be attributed to LMCT bands (Ligand-Metal Charge Transfer) since the ϵ value is high The d-d

Fig 4 Absorption spectra of (a) RuCl₃ (1 96 \times 10⁻⁴ M) in DMF, (b) RuCl₃ (1 96 \times 10⁻⁴ M) and NMO (2 0 \times 10⁻⁴ M) m DMF, (c) RuCl₃ (1 96 \times 10⁻⁴ M) and NMO (5 0 \times 10⁻⁴ M) in DMF, (d) RuCl₃ (1 96 \times 10⁻⁴ M) and NMO (2 0 \times 10⁻² M) in DMF, (e) Ru(V) generated electrochemically in DMF

Fig 5 Voltammogram observed during the anodic oxidation of RuCl₃ and cathodic reduction of the higher oxidation states of ruthenium

transitions are obscured by the LMCT bands [151. On keeping the concentration of $RuCl₃$ constant, if the concentration of NMO is increased, a new absorption at 520 - 600 nm appears (Fig. 4b, c and d). That this 1s due to $Ru(V)$ is established from cyclic voltammetric studies.

Cyclic voltammetric studies have been carried out with Pt wire, Pt foil and Ag wire as the working, counter and reference electrodes, respectively, and tetra(n-butyl) ammomum perchlorate as the supportmg electrolyte. The voltammogram $(Fig. 5)$ shows four peaks A, B, C and D during anodic oxidation, and three peaks E , F and G during the reduction cycle. The peak-topeak potential separation between A and E 1s 90 mV. Peak A and its reduction cycle counterpart E can be assigned to $Ru(IV)/Ru(III)$ interconversion. The peak-to-peak potential separation between B and F 1s 60 mV. Peak B and its reduction cycle counterpart F can be assigned to $Ru(V)/Ru(IV)$ mterconverslon. A difference m potential of 60 mV and 90 mV corresponds to that of a one-electron oxidation for a reversible and a pseudo-reversible process, respectively [16]. Peaks C and D are due to other oxldatlon states higher than $Ru(V)$. The voltammogram is not scanned beyond 1.2 V, as the supportmg electrolyte begins to oxidize above 1.2 volts. The potential correspondmg to Ru(V) 1s 640 mV *uersus* sliver wue. Controlled-potential electrochemical oxidation of $Ru(III)$ was carried out by applying a potential of 700 mV, so as to stop the electrochemical oxidation of $Ru(III)$ at $Ru(V)$. The electronic spectrum taken (Fig. 4e) for the $Ru(V)$ formed electro-

Fig 6 Absorption spectra of (a) Ru(VIII) in CCl₄, (b) Ru(VI) in NaOH, (c) Ru(VII) in NaOH, (d) Ru(VIII) in CCl₄ + excess of DMF

chemically is similar to the spectrum obtained for the mixture of Ru(III) and NMO (Fig. 4b, c and d). Thus the cyclic voltammetric studies, combined with UV-Visible spectral studies, reveal the formation of Ru(V) as the active intermediate. Slmllar UV-Vlslble spectral patterns obtamed for the non-oxo $Ru(V)$ species formed electrochemically in DMF and $oxo Ru(V)$ species obtained from $RuCl₃-NMO$ system in DMF might indicate a weak $Ru-O$ bond. This 1s also evidenced from the IR spectrum, which shows a weak absorption at 805 cm^{-1} that would account for a loose oxo complex of ruthenium [171

The stoichlometry of 1.1 observed between $RuCl₃$ and NMO (a twoelectron oxidant) also supports the formation of $Ru(V)$. The formation of other higher oxldatlon states of ruthenium, namely Ru(IV), Ru(VI), Ru(VI1) and Ru(VIII), 1s not likely due to the reasons mentloned below. Ru(VI), Ru(VI1) and Ru(VII1) were prepared as reported m the hterature [181 and their electronic spectra are given in Fig $6. Ru(VI)$ and Ru(VII) (Fig. 6b and c) are stable only under alkaline conditions [19]. The intermediate cannot be $RuO₂[Ru(IV)]$, as the spectral pattern reported [20] is entirely different from Fig. 4b, c and d. Moreover, the reaction mixture of Ru(II1) and NM0 does not leave any final black residue of RuO₂ (RuO₂ is insoluble in DMF). The intermediate cannot be $Ru(VIII)$ (RuO_A) either, as this is stable only in CCl₄. The electronic spectrum of Ru(VIII) in CCl₄ (Fig 6a) is entirely different when an excess of DMF 1s added (Fig. 6e).

Fig 7 (a) EPR spectrum of $RuCl₃$ in DMF frozen at 77 K (b) EPR spectrum for the **mixture of RuC13 and N-oxide m DMF frozen at 77 K**

EPR studies have also been carried out m order to confirm the formation of Ru(V). The EPR spectrum of RuCl₃ in DMF (Fig 7a) consists of six signals at 77 K. (At room temperature, ruthenium compounds do not give EPR signals.) The most intense signal appearing with DPPH will account for $I = 0$ (due to a 70% abundance of even isotopes of ruthenium), and the other signals will account for $I = 5/2$ (due to a 30% abundance of odd isotopes of ruthenium). A mixture of $RuCl₃$ and NMO in DMF after a long reaction time also gives an EPR spectrum (Fig. 7b) similar to that of $RuCl₃$ in DMF. Though the number of signals expected for $Ru(V)$ is greater, all the expected signals are not seen. The followmg reasons could be given for obtaining similar EPR spectral patterns for both $RuCl₃$ and $Ru(V)$ (obtained from $RuCl₃$ and NMO .

(1) EPR spectra were taken at low temperature, **z e** 77 K, where there 1s a chance for electrons to pair up due to the splitting of t_{2g} levels, in which case a d³ system, ie Ru(V), can have a doublet paramagnetic ground state $(d_{xy})^2(d\pi)^1$ $(d\pi = d_{xy}$ or d_{yz}) which will also account for only one unpaired electron. This type of doublet paramagnetic ground state representation has been given in the case of $Ru(V)$ dioxo complexes [21].

(ii) Zero-field splitting for $Ru(V)$, a d^3 system, may be large, and consequently lines corresponding to $-3/2$ to $-1/2$ and $1/2$ to $3/2$ are not seen in the X-band The $-1/2$ to $1/2$ transition for Ru(V) might be embedded with lines corresponding to those of unreacted Ru(III), which is always present in the reaction mixture and hence the presence of $Ru(V)$ is unidentifiable by EPR

(iii) Lines corresponding to $Ru(V)$ might be too broad to be seen unambiguously. Due to the reasons mentroned above, EPR studies do not give conclusive evidence for Ru(V) formation

The intermediate $Ru(V)$ oxo complex cannot be isolated, and can be prepared only *in situ* by oxidizing catalytic amounts of $RuCl₃$ using NMO. Recently a novel Ru(V) dioxo species, $\lceil Ru(V)(tmc)(O_2)\rceil ClO_4$ (tmc = tetramethyl-1,4,8,11-tetraazacyclotetradecane) has been synthesized and characterized $[21]$, which supports the existence of $Ru(V)$ monomer complex and Ru(V) mono oxo species like $[Ru(V)(tmc)(O)Cl]^{+2}$, generated electrochemically *in situ*, is reported to catalyse oxidation of alcohols [22]. On the basis of the kinetic, spectral and electrochemical investigations, the following mechanism (Scheme 4) could be proposed:

(RI and R2 arc alkyl or aryl groups)

$$
\begin{bmatrix} 0 & -\delta + \delta \\ C_3 R u^{V} + - -\rho - CH - R_1 \\ H & R_2 \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{fast}} R_1 - \frac{1}{C} - OH + C_2 - Ru^L - H + CI^{-1}
$$

$$
R_1 - \frac{t}{C} - OH \xrightarrow{\text{fast}} R_1 - C = 0 + H^+
$$

\n
$$
R_2
$$

\n
$$
C_1 - R_1V + H^+ + CI \xrightarrow{\text{fast}} R_1C_3 + H_2O
$$

Scheme 4

In the absence of any inhibition by added N -methylmorpholine (NM), a prior equilibrium step involving this as the product is excluded. Ruthenium compounds are known to form adducts with organic compounds [231. There is a shift in the NMR signal ($\Delta \tau = 0.4$ units) of the hydroxylic proton of the alcohol towards a lower τ value in the presence of a mixture of Ru(III) and

NMO, which indicates an adduct formation between $Ru(V)$ and alcohol. The shift m the NMR signal of the hydroxyhc proton observed on addmg a paramagnetic metal compound to an alcohol indicates a loose complexation between alcohol and metal compound [24] There is no shift m the NMR signal when Ru(II1) and alcohol are present m the absence of NMO, which rules out the posabihty of adduct formation between Ru(II1) and alcohol. Mere addition of NM0 also does not affect the position of the hydroxyhc proton. Ruthenium compounds are known to be good hydride ion abstractmg agents [25]. In order to fmd out whether hydride ion abstraction is the rate-determmmg step, primary kinetic isotopic studies have been carried out using 2-propanol-d₈ and 2-propanol. As the value of k_H/k_D is rather small (1.2), the hydride ion abstraction step is not likely to be rate-determinmg. The above mechanism leads to the rate expression (2):

rate =
$$
\frac{k_1 k_2 [S][NMO][Ru(III)]}{k_{-1} + k_2 [S]}
$$
 (2)

Equation (2) can be rearranged to give eqn (4)

$$
\frac{1}{\text{rate}} = \frac{k_{-1}}{k_1 k_2 [\text{Ru(III)]} [\text{S}][\text{NMO}]} + \frac{1}{k_1 [\text{Ru(III)]} [\text{NMO}]} \tag{4}
$$

Equation (4) can be verified using the data obtamed for low concentrations of the substrate $(0.05 \cdot 0.2 \text{ M})$. The values of k_1 , the second order rate constant and k_{-1}/k_2 evaluated from the plots of $1/\text{rate}$ *uersus* $1/[S]$ at constant $Ru(III)$ and NMO (Fig. 8) for all the three alcohols are given in Table 2. At high concentrations of the substrate $(>0.5 \text{ M})$, k_{-1} is negligible compared to $k_2[S]$. This explains the zero order in substrate at high concentrations. There is a good agreement between the values of k_1 in Tables 1 and 2, which supports the given mechanism $4. k_{-1}$ is not negligible compared to k_2 [S] for low concentrations of the substrate $(0.05 - 0.2$ M) and so the order m substrate is fractional. Thus mechanism 4 explams all the expenmental observations. Experimental mvestigations could not be carried out for concentrations of substrate below 0.05 M, owing to the maccuracies involved m the isolation and estimation of the ketone formed m these cases. Attempts were not made to calculate k_1/k_{-1} from the spectral studies, since ruthenium(III) has considerable absorption in the region where the $Ru(III)$ -NM0 system absorbs (Fig. 4).

The order of reactivity among the secondary alcohols has been compared by carrying out reactions at low substrate concentrations where a fractional order is observed. Among the non-cyclic alcohols, the order of reactivity is given as **benzhydrol > 1-phenylethanol >** 2-propanol (Table 3), m accordance with polar effect [261. Among the cychc alcohols the order of reactivity (Table 3) is **cycloheptanol >** cyclopentanol > cyclohexanol. Such a reactivity pattern can be explained on the basis of bond hybridization changes [271. Though the variation m rates among the alcohols is small, the relative rates mentioned m Table 4 cannot be considered as constants, which indicates that the substrate is taking part in the rate-determining step.

Fig 8 Evaluation of k_1 **and** k_{-1}/k_2 **from the double reciprocal plots for RuCl₃-catalysed oxldatlon of secondary alcohols by NM0**

TABLE 2

Evaluation of k_1 and k_{-1}/k_2 from the double reciprocal plots (Fig 8)

Conditions $[NMO] = 0.005 M$, $[RuCl₃] = 2 \times 10^{-4} M$, $[S] = 0.05, 0.1$ and 0 2 M, temperature 35 ± 0 1 °C, solvent DMF

From the structure proposed for the adduct m the Scheme 4, one would expect that the partial positive charge on the secondary carbon atom will be delocalized by electron-donating groups in the para-position of the benzene rmg m 1-phenylethanol. Hence various substituted 1-phenylethanols were employed in order to determine the nature of the transition state The slope (ρ) of the Hammett plot (Fig. 9, Table 4) is -0.3 . Though definite information cannot be drawn from the very small value of ρ , it does indicate that the substrate 1s involved m the rate-determmmg step.

TABLE 3

Conditions [NMO] = 0 005 M, $[Ru^{+3}] = 2 \times 10^{-4}$ M, $[S] = 0 05$ M, temperature 35 ± **0 1 "C, solvent DMF**

TABLE 4

Pseudo-first-order rate constants for the oxidation of a few p-substituted 1-phenylethanols and their corresponding substituent constants

Conditions $[NMO] = 0.005 M$, $[RuCl_3] = 2 \times 10^{-4} M$, $[S] = 0.1 M$, temperature 35 ± **0 1 "C, solvent DMF**

Fig 9 Plot of log *k'* for RuCl₃-catalyzed oxidation of *p*-substituted 1-phenylethanols by NMO in DMF against Hammett σ values of the substituents

The function of the system $RuCl₃-NMO$ is similar to oxidations catalysed by cytochrome P-450. In the case of cytochrome P-450-oxidant system, the metal porphyrms form active metal-oxo species m an unusual oxidation state which reacts with the substrate and m so doing the metalloporphyrin is regenerated. In the case of the $RuCl₃-NMO$ system, a $Ru(V)$ 0x0 species is the active intermediate which oxidizes alcohols and finally Ru(II1) is regenerated. In the case of the Fe(TPP)Cl-iodosobenzene system, the formation of a $Fe(V)$ oxo species has been suggested [28], whereas in the case of the $Fe(TPP)Cl-m$ -chloroperbenzoic acid $[29, 30]$, $Fe(TPP)Cl$ N -oxide [31] and Ru(III)porphyrin-iodosobenzene systems [32], the oxo metal(IV)porphyrm cation radical has been shown to be the active mtermediate. In the case of $Mn(TPP)Cl-catalysed$ oxidations, the $Mn(V)$ oxo complex $[4]$ and Mn(IV) oxy radicals $[33]$ have been shown as active intermediates with N-oxide and iodosobenzene, respectively. In the case of the $Cr(TPP)Cl$ -iodosobenzene system, the $Cr(V)$ species has been isolated and characterized [34]. Since the Ru(III)-NM0 system is a non-porphyrm system, the formation of a $Ru(IV)$ oxo species is not possible. $Ru(IV)$ oxy radical formation is also not possible smce there is no evidence for free radical intermediates m the Ru(III)-NM0 system.

The chlorides of other Group VIII metals such as Rh and Ir are not effective m catalysmg the oxidation of organic substrates, probably because the higher oxidation states are not formed easily with NMO. Ir(III), Rh(II1) and metal chlorides of the iron triad are very inert towards oxidation with NMO, except m porphyrms of iron and manganese. In the case of the latter, the oxidative addition becomes facile since the porphyrin rmg system mcreases the nucleophihcity of the metal. The ability to undergo oxidative addition [35] and the stability of the higher oxidation states of the metal [36] decrease across the period as $Ru > Rh > Pd$ and increase down the group $Fe < Ru < Os$.

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