

Amavadine as a catalyst for the peroxidative halogenation, hydroxylation and oxygenation of alkanes and benzene

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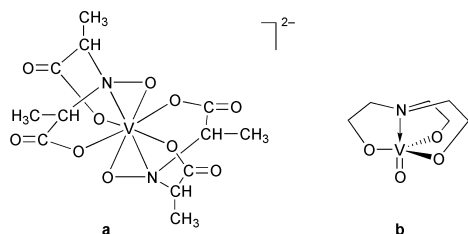
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Synthetic amavadine models, $[V(\text{HIDPA})_2]^{2-}$ and $[V(\text{HIDA})_2]^{2-}$ [where HIDPA and HIDA stand for the basic forms of 2,2'-(hydroxyimino)dipropionic and 2,2'-(hydroxyimino)diacetic acid, respectively], exhibit haloperoxidase- or peroxidase-type activities, and act as catalysts for the selective peroxidative monohalogenation, hydroxylation or oxo-functionalization of alkanes or aromatic compounds such as benzene and mesitylene at room temperature.

The roles of vanadium in biology have been the object of current and growing interest¹ from both biological and chemical perspectives. In particular, the biological role of amavadine, the natural bare octacoordinated vanadium(IV) complex $[V(\text{HIDPA})_2]^{2-}$, $[\text{HIDPA}]^{3-}$ = basic form of (S,S)-2,2'-(hydroxyimino)dipropionic acid² present in some *Amanita* fungi, is still an intriguing matter, although circumstantial evidence has started to emerge suggesting³ that it can act either as a peroxidase which catalyses the oxidation of particular thiols to disulfide products, or as a catalase by promoting the decomposition of H_2O_2 . Vanadium(V) haloperoxidases which have been found mainly in some brown and red marine algae have also raised much interest and their structures and functions have been investigated,¹ inorganic biomimetic reagents proposed and other vanadium complexes applied^{4–6} to the peroxidative oxidation of alkenes and aromatic hydrocarbons. However, alkanes have been much less studied^{6b,c,7} and only very rarely has a catalytic activity of vanadium been recognized for such reactions.

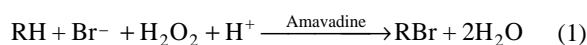
We now report that saturated (*e.g.* cyclohexane or cyclooctane) and aromatic (benzene or mesitylene) hydrocarbons can be oxidized catalytically, at room temperature, by a system composed of synthetic amavadine models and H_2O_2 in acidic medium, to give halo-, hydroxo- or oxo-functionalized compounds, thus suggesting a potential wider biological role for naturally occurring amavadine than that considered so far and demonstrating the capacity of a biogenic vanadium complex, much simpler than an enzyme, to catalyse, in mild conditions, the functionalization of alkanes, a challenging problem⁸ in modern chemistry. Moreover, this complex constitutes, to our knowledge, the first reported vanadium catalyst for the peroxidative halogenation of alkanes.

In effect, we have observed that $\text{Ca}[V(\text{HIDPA})_2]$ (the Ca^{2+} salt of synthetic amavadine) **a** or its model $\text{Ca}[V(\text{HIDA})_2]$



$[V(\text{HIDA})_2]^{2-}$ [where HIDA = basic form of 2,2'-(hydroxyimino)diacetic acid], in a two-phase water–NCMe system also containing H_2O_2 , KBr and HNO_3 (in high excess relative to the vanadium compound), catalyse at room temperature the peroxidative bromination of

saturated and aromatic hydrocarbons, as shown in Tables 1 and 2 for typical experiments with cyclohexane and benzene to give bromocyclohexane and bromobenzene, respectively, according to the overall reaction (1). Catalytic chlorination (using KCl instead of KBr) also occurred for benzene and, in all the cases, only the mono-halogenated products were selectively obtained.



The activity of the system increases with the amounts of H_2O_2 and of the acid, but beyond a limit (*e.g. ca.* 150 molar ratio for H_2O_2 , relatively to vanadium, for the case of the bromination of cyclohexane) no further increase is observed and the activity can even decrease. Values of the turnover number (TON) are given in Tables 1 and 2 for typical essays (6 h reaction time) and indicate that both vanadium complexes have a comparable

Table 1 Amavadine catalysed peroxidative bromination,^a hydroxylation^b and oxygenation^b of cyclohexane

V complex	$\text{H}_2\text{O}_2 : \text{V}^c$	$\text{HNO}_3 : \text{V}^c$	Turnover number (TON) ^d		
<i>Bromination:</i>					
$\text{Ca}[V(\text{HIDPA})_2]$	175	3610	10	—	—
$\text{Ca}[V(\text{HIDA})_2]$	175	50	0	—	—
	175	290	2	—	—
	175	580	5	—	—
	175	1155	6	—	—
	175	2890	17	—	—
	175	3610	15	—	—
$[\text{VO}[\text{N}(\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O})_3]]$	175	2890	9	—	—
<i>Hydroxylation and oxygenation:</i>					
$\text{Ca}[V(\text{HIDPA})_2]$	220	72	—	18	4
	440	72	—	32	4
	880	72	—	32	—
	440	144	—	30	3
$\text{Ca}[V(\text{HIDA})_2]$	110	72	—	11	4
	220	72	—	33	7
	440	72	—	33	4
	880	72	—	25	4
	220	36	—	25	6
	220	144	—	21	6
	440	0	—	3	0.7
	440	144	—	42	8
	440	290	—	37	10
	440	580	—	26	8
$[\text{VO}[\text{N}(\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O})_3]]$	440	72	—	46	7

^a Two-phase liquid system: V complex (0.010 mmol), cyclohexane (5 mmol), KBr (2.5 mmol), H_2O (2.5 cm^3), NCMe (2.5 cm^3), H_2O_2 and HNO_3 (amounts given in the Table), 20 °C, 6 h. ^b V complex (0.010 mmol), cyclohexane (5 mmol), NCMe (2.5 cm^3), H_2O_2 and HNO_3 (amounts given in the Table). ^c Molar ratio relative to the V complex. ^d Moles of product per mole of V complex [corrected for blanks (for a high excess of acid in the absence of V complex, the halogenated product is detected in lower yield)], determined by GLC or GC-MS, using an internal standard, after separation from the vanadium and ionic species. The molar yields (%) relative to the substrate (*i.e.* moles of product per 100 moles of substrate) are given by $0.2 \times \text{TON}$.

Table 2 Amavadine catalysed peroxidative bromination and hydroxylation of benzene^a

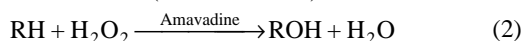
V complex	H ₂ O ₂ :V	HNO ₃ :V	Turnover number (TON)	
			BrC ₆ H ₅	PhOH
<i>Bromination:</i>				
Ca[V(HIDPA) ₂]	175	5050	9	—
Ca[V(HIDA) ₂]	175	3610	10	—
	175	5050	11	—
[VO{N(CH ₂ CH ₂ O) ₃ }]	175	3610	9	—
<i>Hydroxylation:</i>				
Ca[V(HIDPA) ₂]	440	72	—	6
Ca[V(HIDA) ₂]	440	72	—	16
[VO{N(CH ₂ CH ₂ O) ₃ }]	440	72	—	8

^a See footnotes to Table 1.

activity. Hence, *e.g.* TON *ca.* 10–15 for the molar ratios H₂O₂:V = 175 and HNO₃:V = 3610.

No activity was found for the free (hydroxyimino)dicarboxylic acids H₃-HIDPA or H₃-HIDA and the active species has the metal in the 5+ oxidation state (the starting blue V^{IV} complexes are oxidized by H₂O₂ to the corresponding red V^V forms, as observed by the immediate colour change of the reaction solution on addition of the peroxide). The presence of vanadium in the 5+ oxidation state has also been demonstrated in the vanadium-dependent bromoperoxidases and the formation of peroxy-vanadium complexes as active intermediate species has been proposed.^{1a,b} In our system, the hydroxyimine(1-) groups, η²-(O-N<), of the HIDPA³⁻ or HIDA³⁻ ligands that bind to the metal are isoelectronic with peroxide(2-) and therefore the oxidized complexes relate to bis(peroxy)-vanadium(v) species. Nevertheless, the presence of H₂O₂ is required for the detection of activity and the vanadium-promoted Br⁻ oxidation by H₂O₂ (to HOBr or a derivative thereof) occurs in the aqueous phase and the halogenation of the organic substrate in the organic phase (NCMe). The vanadium complexes are soluble in both solvents and the peroxidative halogenation occurs smoothly even without addition of a phase-transfer agent.

Apart from behaving as catalysts for the halo-functionalization of alkanes and aromatics, as shown above, synthetic amavadine and its model can also catalyse, at room temperature, the hydroxylation (reactions 2) and/or oxo-functionalization of these types of substrates. The reactions occur in homogeneous conditions (single-phase system), by treatment of an acetonitrile solution of the vanadium complex, in the presence of H₂O₂ and HNO₃, with the substrate (Tables 1 and 2).



The system does not require so high an acidic medium as for bromination, and the activity towards oxygenation of cyclohexane to cyclohexanol and cyclohexanone, which is already detected without added acid (overall TON = 4, 6 h reaction time), reaches a maximum (overall TON *ca.* 50 in the [V(HIDA)₂]²⁻ system) for an acid:vanadium molar ratio of *ca.* 140 (for H₂O₂:V = 440). The alcohol is always the main product, but the ketone also forms. The selectivity is dependent on the experimental conditions, in particular the amounts of H₂O₂ and HNO₃, and *e.g.* for the above conditions, the obtained cyclohexanol/cyclohexanone molar ratio is 5.3, whereas a value of 9.2 is reached for HNO₃:V = 72 (also for H₂O₂:V = 440).

The selective oxidation to the alcohol, although less extensive, occurs for benzene (that forms exclusively phenol, TON = 16 or 6 for the corresponding [V(HIDA)₂]²⁻ or [V(HIDPA)₂]²⁻ systems), whereas mesitylene (1,3,5-trimethylbenzene) is oxidized to the aldehyde (3,5-dimethylbenzaldehyde) (TON = 13 or 7, respectively) rather than to the alcohol.

Attempts to characterize active intermediate vanadium species are under way, as well as the extension of the work to

other substrates and to other amavadine models and related complexes. In particular, we have also observed catalytic activity towards the above reactions for various vanadium(v) complexes with other polydentate ligands with N,3O-donor atom sets such as triethanolamine, *e.g.* [VO{N(CH₂CH₂O)₃}]^b (see Tables 1 and 2), aminocarboxylates, *etc.*

To the best of our knowledge, this study provides the first examples of vanadium catalysts for the peroxidative halogenation of alkanes, at room temperature. It might be expected that natural amavadine showed similar properties, *i.e.* the possibility to act as a haloperoxidase or a peroxidase, catalysing the peroxidative halogenation, hydroxylation and/or oxygenation of organic substrates, but we note that, since for the halogenation reactions the pH was very low, the results cannot be directly extrapolated to biological conditions. Curiously, the vanadium-dependent haloperoxidases, which probably developed later, since vanadium is in the oxidation state 5+, catalyse halogenation reactions at pH 5–6 to give products that appear to have defensive roles. On the basis of electrochemical studies³ we have suggested that amavadine, which, as stated, is a simple complex, not an enzyme, may act as a kind of primitive peroxidase (towards thiols) or as a catalase (if substrates other than H₂O₂ are not present), behaving also as a protective agent against external microbial pathogens or host body damage. Halogenation of alkanes and aromatics which, as shown in this work, occur in the laboratory at room temperature but very low pH for the particular substrates studied, is unlikely to occur *in vivo* with the substrates studied but may eventually be viable in less extreme (even physiological) pH conditions for other more favourable substrates.

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