

buried in the native state of myoglobins and do not react with hydrogen ions.<sup>4</sup> The effective  $pK$ 's of the remaining histidines and those of the glutamic and aspartic acid side chains are lowered considerably, compared to their intrinsic  $pK$  values, because of the electrostatic interactions in the native conformation.<sup>14,16</sup> As a result, the net positive charge on the native protein is lower than would be expected from the intrinsic  $pK$  values of the side chains. At lower pH values, the unfolding of the protein results in complete protonation of the buried histidines, disruption of the heme-globin interaction, and changes in the effective  $pK$  values of the side chains toward the intrinsic  $pK$ 's.<sup>11,15</sup> Thus, the denatured state may be characterized by the absence of heme and a relatively higher positive charge on the globin. Conversely, the native state of myoglobin may be characterized by the presence of heme in the hydrophobic pocket and by a lower net positive charge on the protein molecule. In the present communication, we use these criteria to differentiate between the electrospray-produced ions of equine myoglobin in a native conformation and those produced from the denatured protein.

Figure 1A shows the spectrum obtained from an aqueous equine myoglobin solution<sup>17</sup> at pH = 3.35 (no salts or buffers added), a pH where the protein is known to be completely denatured.<sup>15</sup> The spectrum shows a single distribution of peaks, with protonation states ranging from 20+ to 10+, with 15+ the most intense. The average molecular mass measured from these peaks is  $16951 \pm 1$  u and corresponds to the calculated mass of apomyoglobin (16951.5 u; without heme). These spectral characteristics are similar to those previously reported for the electrospray ionization of myoglobin.<sup>20-23</sup> If we assume that certain solution characteristics of the protein, such as the degree of protonation and the extent of heme-globin complexation, are preserved into the gas phase, then our mass spectrometric results confirm that the protein is in a denatured form in this solution (as evidenced by the high degree of protonation and the total absence of ions corresponding to the heme-globin complex).

Figure 1B shows an electrospray mass spectrum obtained from an equine myoglobin solution at pH 3.9 (no salts or buffers added). This pH is in a range of values where both native and denatured forms of myoglobin can coexist in solution.<sup>14,15</sup> The spectrum is different from that shown in Figure 1A because it exhibits two distinct distributions of charge states. The first ranges from 19+ to 9+, with 15+ the most intense. The average molecular mass calculated from this distribution is  $16949 \pm 2$  u and corresponds to that of apomyoglobin. The second distribution, in the higher  $m/z$  range, shows three peaks with protonation states 11+ to 9+ (shown circled in Figure 1B). The low charge state components (lower than 9+) of this distribution could not be observed because their  $m/z$  values lie beyond the range of our instrument ( $m/z < 2000$ ).<sup>19</sup> Two important features make this distribution distinct from the first one and also from the distribution shown in Figure 1A. The charge states are comparatively lower, and the measured molecular mass is significantly higher ( $17564 \pm 2$  u). This measured mass corresponds to that of the intact heme-globin complex (calculated molecular mass = 17568.0 u). The corre-

lation between the measured mass and the low charge states of this distribution suggests that these ions arise from the native protein in solution.<sup>24</sup> At a higher pH value (pH = 4.4), where the protein is predicted to be in a wholly native state,<sup>14,15</sup> the first distribution centered around 15+ disappeared completely while the 9+ charge state of the second distribution continued to be observed (data not shown).<sup>26</sup> Similar results were also obtained for dog myoglobin.

Our findings demonstrate that electrospray-ionization mass spectrometry can provide information on the conformation of myoglobin under different solution conditions and that the non-covalently bound heme-globin complex found in the native state can be measured mass spectrometrically. Although the data do not imply that the solution conformation is preserved into the gas phase, the results suggest that native, noncovalent associations of proteins and cofactors in solution can be preserved into the gas phase and observed by mass spectrometry.

**Acknowledgment.** This work was supported in part by Grants RR00862 and RR07065, Division of Research Resources, NIH, and GM38274, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, NIH.

(24) Peaks corresponding to a complex of heme with apomyoglobin have been observed earlier.<sup>9,25</sup> However, these earlier studies were carried out under solution conditions that favored denaturation, and the charge distribution of the complex was similar to the distribution of apomyoglobin, which centered around 17+ to 19+. The nature and origin of the association complex in the earlier studies are thus uncertain.

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## A Synthetic *p*-Nitrophenyl Esterase with Remarkable Substrate Selectivity

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Received May 28, 1991

A new linear oligomer, **4** ( $n \sim 10$ ), recently prepared and characterized in our laboratory,<sup>1</sup> has been evaluated as a catalyst for hydrolysis of *p*-nitrophenyl esters of alkanic acids, **1**. This synthetic material not only exhibits high levels of catalytic efficiency and conforms to the Michaelis-Menten model but also demonstrates enzyme-like specificity for esters derived from acids of moderate chain length ( $C_{12} \rightarrow C_{16}$ ) with **1** ( $n = 14$ ) the optimum substrate ( $V_{\max} = 7.5 \times 10^{-7} \text{ M s}^{-1}$ ,  $K_M = 2.9 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ,  $k_{\text{cat}}/K_M = 1.1 \times 10^4 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$  at 30 °C in 1:1 MeOH-aqueous buffer (pH 8.0) with [cat.] =  $2.5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ M}$ ). Significantly, catalysis is accompanied by rapid release of product from the catalytic site, a 4-(dialkylamino)pyridine.

Duplication of enzymic efficiency and selectivity with synthetic materials has been the goal of much research.<sup>2-15</sup> Studies directed

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(17) Aqueous solutions (acidified with acetic acid, no salts or buffers added) of equine skeletal muscle myoglobin (Sigma Chemical Company, St. Louis, MO) were electrosprayed through a 150  $\mu\text{m}$  i.d. stainless steel syringe needle, whose tip was etched to a conical shape.<sup>5,18</sup> The electrospray mass spectrometer used in the present investigations has been described earlier.<sup>19</sup> The protein concentrations were in the range 20-40  $\mu\text{M}$ , and the flow rates were 0.4-0.8  $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}$ .

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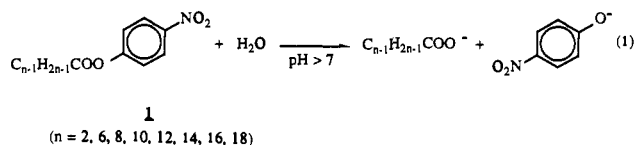
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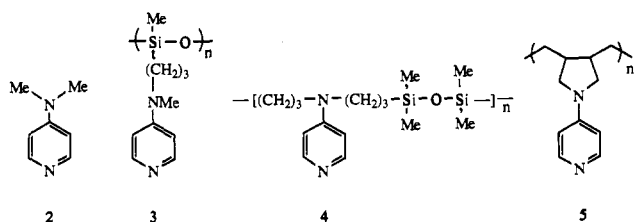
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toward understanding enhancement of amide and ester hydrolysis frequently utilize **1** as a substrate to gain mechanistic insight (eq 1). Most studies have focused on increasing catalyst efficiency



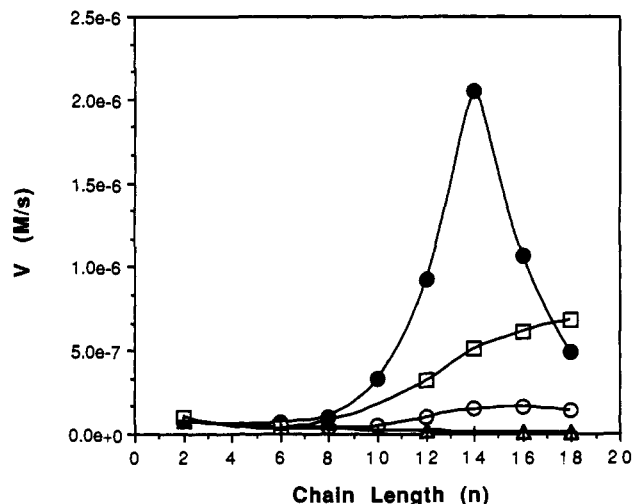
to bring activity of synthetic catalysts to levels afforded by relevant enzymes. Our goal has been to examine structure/activity relationships in linear, water-soluble, polymeric catalysts that exhibit high levels of substrate selectivity and notable rate acceleration in hydrolysis of **1**. True enzyme-like behavior requires that "active sites" discriminate among structurally different *p*-nitrophenyl esters and effect hydrolysis at different reaction velocities with turnover.<sup>16</sup> Since variants of **1** differ by number of carbons in the alkanolate chain, binding between catalyst and substrate is controlled by hydrophobic-lipophilic interactions.<sup>17-21</sup>

The 4-(dialkylamino)pyridines (DAAP), of which 4-(dimethylamino)pyridine (**2**) is best known, are highly reactive "supernucleophilic" catalysts for transacylation reactions in aprotic solvents.<sup>1,14,15,22-24</sup> Simple monomeric DAAPs are known to be



relatively ineffective nucleophilic catalysts for transacylation reactions in aqueous media. Klotz et al. discovered that poly(ethylenimine) derivatives functionalized with DAAPs exhibit significant catalytic activity in the hydrolysis of **1** ( $n = 6$ ).<sup>14</sup> Mathias and Vaidya described poly(4-diallylamino)pyridine (**5**), which exhibited increasing activity toward variants of **1** with increasing alkanolate chain length ( $C_2$ – $C_{12}$ ).<sup>15</sup> Recently we reported the synthesis and characterization of **3** and **4**, which differ significantly from one another and from the Klotz and Mathias catalysts. The solubility properties of **3** and **4** in water and their catalytic efficiency toward acylation of sterically hindered alcohols in aprotic solvent encouraged investigation of them as catalysts for reactions of electrophilic lipophiles in aqueous media.

Hydrolysis of **1** ( $n = 2$ – $18$ , 30 °C, 1:1 (v/v) MeOH–aqueous buffer, pH 8.0) catalyzed by **2**–**5** was investigated by methods widely used for evaluation of enzymic catalysis.<sup>25,26</sup> The results



**Figure 1.** Dependence of reaction velocity ( $V$ ) for hydrolysis of **1** on alkanolate chain length ( $n$ ) at 30 °C in 1:1 (v/v) MeOH–aqueous buffer (0.05 M  $\text{H}_2\text{PO}_4^-/\text{HPO}_4^{2-}$ , pH 8.0):  $[\mathbf{1}] = 5 \times 10^{-5}$  M;  $[\text{cat.}] = 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$  M. Catalyst: none,  $\square$ ; **2**,  $\triangle$ ; **3**,  $\circ$ ; **4**,  $\bullet$ ; **5**,  $\square$ .

are illustrated in Figure 1. Macromolecule **4**, in contrast to **2**, **3**, and **5**, exhibits clear preference for **1** ( $n = 14$ ); therefore, *this synthetic, linear oligomer exhibits enzyme-like substrate selectivity*. Polymer **5**, however, shows a steady increase in reaction velocity with increasing alkanolate chain length. The dependence of reaction velocity on substrate concentration for  $C_6$ ,  $C_{12}$ ,  $C_{14}$ , and  $C_{16}$  esters was examined in the presence of **4**. *The three longer chain esters exhibited saturation kinetics over the concentration range studied, while the  $C_6$  ester did not*. The pH dependence of reaction velocities for hydrolysis of **1** ( $n = 12$ ) in 1:1 (v/v) methanol–aqueous buffer was measured in the presence of **2**–**4** at 30 °C. The reaction velocity increases linearly with pH from pH 7.0–9.0 for all three catalysts<sup>27</sup> and continues to increase at higher pH due to uncatalyzed reaction with  $\text{OH}^-$ . Kinetic studies used 10-fold excess substrate over catalyst concentrations, and reactions were followed for 4–5 half-lives. Velocity values are directly proportional to catalyst concentration over the range  $8.0 \times 10^{-7}$  M to  $1.0 \times 10^{-5}$  M. Thus, **3** and **4**, like DMAP, function as true catalysts.

As a further test of the ability of **4** to function as an enzyme mimic, the data from hydrolyses of **1** ( $n = 12, 14, 16$ ) were subjected to Michaelis–Menten analysis.<sup>16</sup> Lineweaver–Burk plots ( $1/V$  vs  $1/[\text{S}]$ ) are linear, as predicted by the Michaelis–Menten equation ( $1/V = K_M/V_{\text{max}}[\text{S}] + 1/V_{\text{max}}$ ) where  $V_{\text{max}}$  is the maximum reaction velocity,  $K_M$  is the Michaelis constant, and  $[\text{S}]$  is the substrate concentration). The Michaelis–Menten parameters, where  $k_{\text{cat}}/K_M$  ( $k_{\text{cat}} = V_{\text{max}}/[\text{cat.}]_{\text{total}}$ ) indicates specificity of an enzyme for competing substrates, are as follows: ( $n$ ,  $V_{\text{max}}$ ,  $k_{\text{cat}}$ ,  $K_M$ ,  $k_{\text{cat}}/K_M$ ) 12,  $6.1 \times 10^{-7}$  M  $\text{s}^{-1}$ ,  $0.27$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ ,  $5.9 \times 10^{-5}$  M,  $4600$  M $^{-1}$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ ; 14,  $7.5 \times 10^{-7}$  M  $\text{s}^{-1}$ ,  $0.33$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ ,  $2.9 \times 10^{-5}$  M,  $11,400$  M $^{-1}$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ ; 16,  $4.5 \times 10^{-7}$  M  $\text{s}^{-1}$ ,  $0.20$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ ,  $2.4 \times 10^{-5}$  M,  $8300$  M $^{-1}$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ . Substrate optimization at  $n = 14$  is due to enhanced velocity of hydrolysis as given by  $k_{\text{cat}}$ . Values of  $K_M$  show a steady

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(26) Catalytic activity is taken as equivalent to the reaction velocity,  $V$ , i.e., the initial velocity of product formation.

(27) The pH dependence of degree of protonation of **4** is complex and is the focus of current investigation.

decrease with increasing alkanolate chain length; however,  $k_{\text{cat}}/K_M$  maximizes at  $n = 14$ . These parameters are consistent with effective binding of substrate to catalyst and efficient catalysis of hydrolysis ( $t_{1/2}$  for **1** ( $n = 14$ ) is 15 s at  $[\text{cat.}] = 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$  M). The factors that control substrate selectivity in **4** are believed to be those responsible for enzyme specificity.<sup>16</sup>

The performance of **4** as a *p*-nitrophenyl esterase was compared with those of cholesterol esterase ( $k_{\text{cat}}/K_M = 125 \times 10^4 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ )<sup>28</sup> and chymotrypsin ( $k_{\text{cat}}/K_M = 7.6 \times 10^4 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ).<sup>29</sup> The enzymic reactions are only moderately faster and show optimum activity with substrates of shorter chain length (**1**,  $n = 6$ , for cholesterol esterase and **1**,  $n = 7$ , for chymotrypsin). An important distinction between **4** and the enzymes is that the latter utilize bifunctional catalysis with histidine imidazole and serine hydroxyl as key participants.<sup>16,28</sup>

**Acknowledgment.** We thank the Office of Naval Research for financial support of this work and L. J. Mathias for the sample of poly(DAAP) used in this study.

**Supplementary Material Available:** Plot of  $1/V$  vs  $1/[S]$  for **1** ( $n = 14$ ) in the presence of **4** and tables that list Michaelis-Menten parameters for hydrolysis of **1** ( $n = 12, 14, 16$ ) in the presence of **4** and compare **4** with cholesterol esterase, chymotrypsin, and active synthetic catalysts as a *p*-nitrophenyl esterase (4 pages). Ordering information is given on any current masthead page.

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### Synthesis, Structure, and Superconducting Properties of Single-Phase $\text{Rb}_3\text{C}_{60}$ . A New, Convenient Method for the Preparation of $\text{M}_3\text{C}_{60}$ Superconductors

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Received August 2, 1991

Revised Manuscript Received September 4, 1991

Several synthetic procedures have been developed to produce alkali metal intercalated fullerite superconductors ( $\text{M}_x\text{C}_{60}$ ,  $x = 3$ ). The UCLA version<sup>1</sup> of the original AT&T method<sup>2</sup> (vapor-phase reaction of stoichiometric amounts of  $\text{M} = \text{K}$  or  $\text{Rb}$

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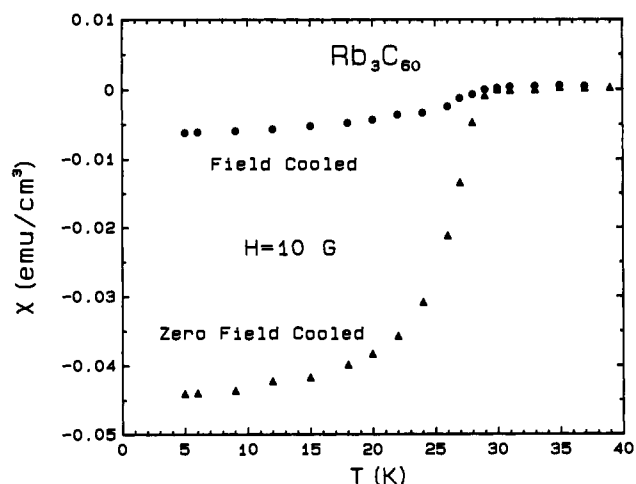


Figure 1. Diamagnetic susceptibility of  $\text{Rb}_3\text{C}_{60}$  (uncompacted powder, 3.5 mg). Circles: field cooled. Triangles: zero field cooled.

and  $\text{C}_{60}$ ) is thus far the only protocol demonstrated to yield phase-pure material (i.e.,  $\text{K}_3\text{C}_{60}$ ).<sup>3</sup> A significant drawback of this method is the limited accuracy of stoichiometric control when only modest quantities of  $\text{C}_{60}$  are used (e.g., 3 mg of  $\text{K} + 20$  mg of  $\text{C}_{60}$ ). Moreover, we have been unable to completely reproduce the UCLA results using our  $\text{C}_{60}$  powder (ca. 1500 Å crystallite size, which according to the described doping model<sup>1</sup> may be an important processing variable). Solution techniques<sup>4</sup> promise greater versatility but also present problems of stoichiometric control. The difficulty of accurately weighing small amounts of reactive metals was reportedly overcome by treating  $\text{C}_{60}$  with alkali/heavy metal amalgams. Exploiting this approach, Kelty et al.<sup>5</sup> claim that the heavy metal acts merely as a spectator. However, Kraus et al.<sup>6</sup> find from weight uptake measurement that the heavy metal Tl is co-intercalated from the  $\text{KTI}$  (1.5) amalgam; the latter depresses the  $T_c$  value to 17.6 K from 19.3 K for the  $\text{K}_3\text{C}_{60}$  binary compound.<sup>3</sup> In all of these methods, the final product of desired stoichiometry ( $x$ ) may be thermodynamically or kinetically limited by miscibility gaps in the binary phase diagram.

We describe here a new vapor-transport technique for producing  $\text{M}_x\text{C}_{60}$ . Stoichiometric control of small batches is markedly improved by reacting pristine  $\text{C}_{60}$  with the saturation-doped product,<sup>7</sup> which simply requires weighing two aliquots of  $\text{C}_{60}$ <sup>8</sup> outside the drybox. A weighed amount of  $\text{C}_{60}$  is treated with a large excess of alkali metal at 225 °C under vacuum. A small temperature gradient during cooldown prevents condensation of excess metal onto the powdered product. The crystallographic composition is  $\text{M}_6\text{C}_{60}$ , whereas repeated weight uptake measurements (K, Rb, or Cs) give  $x$  in the range 6.4–6.7.<sup>9</sup> This air-sensitive material is then diluted with  $\text{C}_{60}$  in the drybox to give a desired  $x$ . The two powders are ground together, sealed under vacuum, heated for 24 h at 250 °C, and then further annealed for 24 h at 350 °C, followed in some cases by 1 h at 400 °C or longer periods at 350 °C. Annealing is crucial to the process since the initial treatment usually yields a multiphase mixture. Extended annealing

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