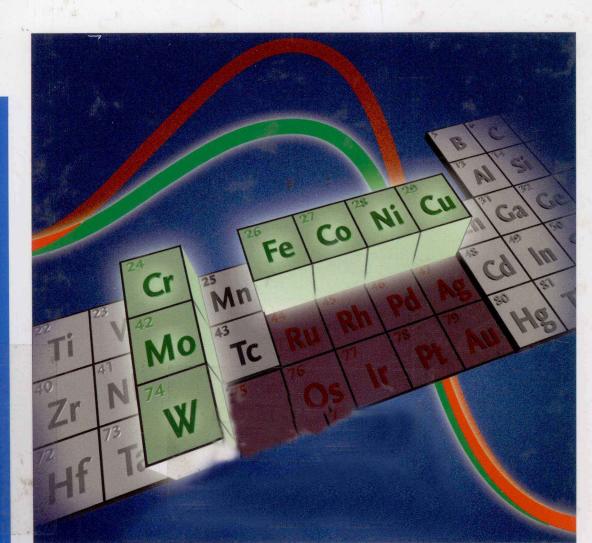
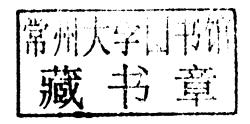
# Catalysis Without Precious Metals



### **Catalysis Without Precious Metals**





WILEY-VCH Verlag GmbH & Co. KGaA

#### The Editor

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#### Library of Congress Card No.: applied for

**British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data** A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

# Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <a href="http://dnb.d-nb.de">http://dnb.d-nb.de</a>>.

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Cover Design Graphik-Design Schulz,
Fußgönheim
Typesetting Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited,
Hong Kong
Printing and Binding Fabulous Printers Pte Ltd,
Singapore

Printed in Singapore Printed on acid-free paper

ISBN: 978-3-527-32354-8

#### **Preface**

Many of the greatest success stories of organometallic and inorganic chemistry are in the application of metal complexes to catalytic reactions. In many cases, precious metals perform the heavy lifting, breaking H–H bonds, forming C–H or C–C bonds, etc. Precious metals have become so familiar in these roles that in some cases the precious metal and their catalytic reactivity seem almost inextricably linked. Wilkinson's catalyst, a rhodium complex, played a pivotal role in our understanding of hydrogenations. More recently, Noyori and co-workers developed remarkably reactive ruthenium complexes for asymmetric catalytic hydrogenations of C=O bonds. Over 150 years have passed since the discovery of a fuel cell that oxidizes hydrogen, yet modern low-temperature fuel cells still require platinum. Many carbon-carbon coupling reactions used extensively in organic synthesis function efficiently with extremely low loadings of palladium catalysts.

Kicking old habits is never easy, despite the allure of significant rewards for making the desired change. Yet we now know that the use of precious metals in catalysis is not always required. The research presented in this book shows how new catalysts that do not require precious metals may ultimately supplant the use of precious metals in some types of reactions. This book also highlights the challenges remaining in the development of catalysts that do not require precious metals. The pathway to devising new types of catalysts using abundant metals often involves scrutiny of reaction mechanisms that could potentially accomplish the desired goal, and finding ways to coerce inexpensive, abundant metals into accomplishing that task. In many cases those mechanisms are altogether different from those used in traditional precious metal catalysts. As can be seen in different chapters in this book, some of the catalytic reactions that use cheap metals are already competitive with well-known reactions that use precious metals. Even in new catalysts that do not yet exhibit rates or lifetimes that compare favorably to long-established and well-optimized precious metal catalysts, fundamentally new reactivity patterns have been discovered, and new classes of catalysts have been developed. This book provides detailed information on many types of reactions that can be catalyzed without the need for precious metals. I hope that these chapters may inspire others to join in the pursuit of "cheap metals for noble tasks."

Research on alternatives to precious metal catalysts has been growing rapidly in recent years, and expected to experience increased growth in the future. The most

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obvious reason for replacing precious metals is that they are very expensive, often costing more than 100 or 1000 times the cost of base metals. The high cost is obviously connected to the low abundance of these metals. High cost alone is not the only reason, however; in some cases specialized organic ligands (used in asymmetric catalysis, for example) cost more than the metal. Substantial costs are involved in industrial processes when recovery and recycle of the metal is required. Another attribute of avoiding precious metals is that some metals like iron have a minimal environmental and toxicological impact. Importantly, some large-scale uses in energy storage and conversion currently being considered would require large amounts of precious metals. In automotive transportation, for example, conversion to a "hydrogen economy" based entirely on fuel cells that require platinum would not be feasible, not only due to the high cost, but because there is not enough platinum available to accommodate such a huge scale of usage.

The order of the chapters in this book follows their order in periodic table, starting at the first row of group 6 (Norton's chapter on chromium catalysts) and continuing to Group 6 metals molybdenum and tungsten. While most of the inexpensive, abundant metals are from the first row of the periodic table, molybdenum and tungsten (from the second and third row of the periodic table) are exceptions, as they are much less expensive than precious metals. Subsequent chapters focus on catalysis by iron (Group 8), cobalt (Group 9), nickel (Group 10) and copper (Group 11). The last chapter highlights new catalysts that have no transition metals at all, using the main group elements phosphorus and boron. The cover highlights the inexpensive, abundant metals that are discussed in this book, with those metals being highlighted in green, and the precious metals of low abundance and high cost being shown in red. Manganese is abundant and inexpensive, and offers appealing opportunities for development into catalytic reactions. But since no chapters in this book focus on Mn, so it was not shown in green on the cover.

This book focuses on homogeneous (molecular) catalysts. There is a need to replace precious metals used in heterogeneous catalysis as well, but that topic is beyond the scope of material that can be covered in one book.

I sincerely thank all of the authors of the chapters in this book. They contributed their expertise and time in the writing of their chapters, and gracefully put up with annoying e-mails and editorial suggestions from me. I appreciate the enthusiasm they share for developing the chemistry of abundant, inexpensive metals as attractive alternatives to precious metals. Paul Chirik and Jack Norton gave me very helpful advice in the planning of this book.

I am deeply indebted to many scientific colleagues who have influenced my thinking, and who helped teach me chemistry over the years. In particular, Carol Creutz (Brookhaven National Laboratory) and Dan DuBois (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) have both been extremely generous with their time and patient with my questions. I thank my scientific mentors, Chuck Casey and Jack Norton, for invaluable advice on many topics for more than twenty-five years.

It was a pleasure to work with Dr. Heike Nöthe at Wiley-VCH, and with Dr. Manfred Köhl in the early stages of preparations and planning for this book.

I dedicate this book to my wife, Cindy, to my son, Claude, and to my daughter, Lindsay. I thank them for being immensely supportive, including times when I was in the lab or my office rather than at home.

R. Morris Bullock June 2010

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## Catalysis Involving the H<sup>\*</sup> Transfer Reactions of First-Row Transition Metals

John Hartung and Jack R. Norton

The M–H bonds of transition-metal hydride complexes may be cleaved heterolytically (H<sup>+</sup>, H<sup>-</sup> transfer) or homolytically (H<sup>+</sup> transfer).  $\Delta G$  for the H<sup>+</sup> transfer in Equation 1.1 is readily quantified by p $K_a$  measurements (see Chapter 3). Analogous measurements for H<sup>-</sup> transfer, or "hydricities", are difficult because the loss of H<sup>-</sup> generates a vacant coordination site. However,  $\Delta G$  for Equation 1.2 can be determined indirectly, from electrochemical and p $K_a$  measurements in the appropriate solvent [1, 2], and we can thus compare the "hydricities" of various hydride complexes (see Chapter 3). The lowest values of  $\Delta G_{H^-}$  (corresponding to the complexes most eager to transfer H<sup>-</sup>) are found for second- and third-row transition metals<sup>1)</sup> [3], which is why those (relatively expensive) metals are good H<sup>-</sup> donors and effective catalysts for reactions like ionic hydrogenation [5–10].

$$M-H \rightleftharpoons M^- + solventH^+$$
 (1.1)

$$[M-H]^- \rightleftharpoons M + H^- \tag{1.2}$$

The thermodynamics of the homolytic cleavage of an M–H bond (1.3) are also available from electrochemical and  $pK_a$  measurements (the thermodynamic cycle in Equations 1.4–1.6). The oxidation potential is that of the one-electron process in Equation 1.5. If the  $pK_a$  is measured in CH<sub>3</sub>CN, and the potential is measured relative to ferrocene/ferrocenium in that solvent,  $\Delta G$  for Equation 1.3 in CH<sub>3</sub>CN is given by Equation 1.7 [11, 12], while the bond dissociation energy (BDE) for Equation 1.3 (the traditional gas phase "bond strength") is given by Equation 1.8<sup>2)</sup>.

$$M-H \rightleftharpoons M \cdot + H \cdot \tag{1.3}$$

$$M-H \rightleftharpoons M^- + H^+ \tag{1.4}$$

$$M^{-} \rightleftharpoons M \cdot + e^{-} \tag{1.5}$$

$$H^+ + e^- \rightleftharpoons H \bullet$$
 (1.6)

- 1) For  $[HM(P-P)_2]^+$ , experiments show that  $\Delta G_{H^-}$  decreases in the order Ni > Pt > Pd; see reference [4].
- The relative and absolute uncertainties in bond strengths determined in this way are discussed in reference [13].

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Hydride	M–H BDE, kcal mol <sup>-1</sup>	
CpCr(CO) <sub>3</sub> H	62.2	
dppm(CO) <sub>4</sub> VH	57.9	
dppe(CO)₄VH	57.5	
dppp(CO)₄VH	56.0	
dppb(CO)₄VH	54.9	

**Table 1.1** Bond dissociation energies of some chromium and vanadium hydrides.

$$\Delta G(M-H)(kcal mol^{-1}) = 1.37pK_a(M-H) + 23.06(M^-/M^*) + 53.6$$
 (1.7)

BDE(M-H)(kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>) = 
$$1.37 pK_a = 23.06E^{\circ} + 59.5$$
 (1.8)

Such measurements show the weakest M–H bonds to be those of first-row transition metals [4], and suggest that these (relatively abundant and cheap) metals are best for catalyzing reactions that involve H transfer. Because most of these metals are nontoxic, their H transfer reactions offer an attractive alternative to the tin-mediated radical chemistry that has become ubiquitous in organic synthesis.

Bond dissociation energies of most M–H bonds lie between 60 and 65 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> [4]. A few are much stronger: the Os–H bond of Cp(CO)<sub>2</sub>OsH has a BDE  $\geq$ 82 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> [14]. On the other hand V–H bonds are particularly weak. Calculations at the B3LYP level of theory on the hypothetical VH<sub>5</sub> give it the weakest M–H bond (43 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>) among neutral "valency-saturated" MH<sub>n</sub> (i.e., among complexes where M forms the maximum number of M–H bonds) [15]. Experimentally Table 1.1 [13] shows very weak V–H bonds for (P–P)(CO)<sub>4</sub>VH (P–P = Ph<sub>2</sub>P(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>PPh<sub>2</sub>, with n = 1 (dppm), n = 2 (dppe), n = 3 (dppp), and n = 4 (dppb) [16, 17].

An H' transfer, or hydrogen atom transfer (HAT), reaction has been defined by Mayer as "the concerted movement of a proton and an electron ... in a single kinetic step where both ... originate from the same reactant and travel to the same product." [18] Mayer considers HAT to be "one type of the broad class of proton-coupled electron transfer (PCET) reactions, which also includes reactions where the proton and electron are separated." The distinction is a matter of ongoing discussion [19, 20], and other acronyms have been proposed [19, 21], but all the reactions to be considered in this chapter can be satisfactorily described as "H' transfer".

### 1.1 H' Transfer Between M-H Bonds and Organic Radicals

HAT reactions from transition-metal hydrides to organic radicals R\* (1.9) are characterized by second-order kinetics. Second-order kinetics have been

Table 1.2	Bond dissociation energies and rates of H' transfer
to tris (p-te	ert-butylphenyl) methyl radical (extrapolated to room
temperatu	re) of several hydrides.

Hydride	BDE, kcal mol <sup>-1</sup>	k <sub>H</sub> , M <sup>-1</sup> s <sup>-1</sup>	
	BDE, Real Hiol	KH, WI S	
Cp(CO)₂Fe−H	57 <sup>a)</sup>	$1.2 \times 10^4$	
Cp(CO) <sub>3</sub> Cr-H	62 <sup>b)</sup>	335	
Cp(CO)₂Ru−H	65 <sup>a)</sup>	$1.03 \times 10^{3}$	
(CO)₄Co−H	59, <sup>c)</sup> 67 <sup>a)</sup>	$1.6 \times 10^{3}$	
(CO) <sub>5</sub> Mn-H	68 <sup>a)</sup>	741	
Cp(CO) <sub>3</sub> Mo-H	69 <sup>a)</sup>	514	
Cp(CO) <sub>3</sub> W-H	72 <sup>a)</sup>	91	
(CO) <sub>4</sub> OsH <sub>2</sub>	78 <sup>d)</sup>	15.7	

a) Ref [120].

established (the rate constants are shown in Table 1.2) for the transfer of H. from a variety of hydrides to the tris(p-tert-butylphenyl)methyl radical [24–26]. The bulky t-Bu substituents keep it entirely monomeric in solution [27, 28]. Additional evidence that H' transfers to R' obey second-order kinetics is provided by studies of the last step in radical hydrogenation reactions (see Equations 1.14 and 1.15 below). If the hydride L<sub>n</sub>M-H in a transfer such as Equation 1.9 is coordinatively saturated (18 electrons), the metalloradical L<sub>n</sub>M' will have a 17 electron configuration.

$$L_n M - H + R \rightleftharpoons L_n M^- + R - H \tag{1.9}$$

Second-order kinetics have also been established for H' transfer in the reverse direction, that is, from R-H to M. The rate constant for Equation 1.10, from 1,4-cyclohexadiene to Cp(CO)2Os, has been measured by time-resolved IR spectroscopy as  $2.1 \times 10^6 \,\mathrm{M}^{-1}\,\mathrm{s}^{-1}$  (23 °C, hexane) [14]. Intriguingly, H can be abstracted by a photogenerated osmium metalloradical from even stronger C-H bonds, such as those of toluene and THF; photolysis of [Tp(CO)2Os]2 (Tp = tris(pyrazolyl) borate) in either of these solvents gives the osmium hydride. (The C-H bonds of toluene (90 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> for the methyl group) and THF (92 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>) are considerably stronger than that of cyclohexadiene (77 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>) [14, 29].)

$$Cp(CO)_2Os$$
 +  $Cp(CO)_2Os$  +  $Cp(CO)_2Os$  (1.10)

Steric factors can be important in H transfer reactions. The rate constant  $(k_{\rm H})$ of H' transfer to tris(p-tert-butylphenyl)methyl radical decreases by a factor of 37 from Cp(CO)3MoH to Cp\*(CO)3MoH (which has an Mo-H bond of comparable

b) Ref [13].

c) Ref [22].

Ref [23].