



Molecular Modeling and Dynamics of Bioinorganic Systems

Edited by

Lucia Banci and Peter Comba

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Molecular Modeling and Dynamics of Bioinorganic Systems

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Molecular Modeling and Dynamics of Bioinorganic Systems

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Preface

The computation of structures and properties of bioinorganic compounds has experienced enormous progress in recent years. Novel approaches to model metal centers, new techniques to compute charges and solvation, and efficient algorithms to screen energy surfaces of large and complex structures have lead to a situation, in which it has now become possible and useful to discuss structures, electronic properties and reaction mechanisms of metalloproteins on the basis of computational studies. The good agreement between experimentally observed properties and computed parameters has increased the credibility of computational methods to a degree where experimentalists and computational chemists agree that the most demanding problems in bioinorganic chemistry may only be solved in a concerted way. Typical examples are the determination of solution structures of metalloproteins, the insight to the function of metalloenzymes and the design of mutated metalloproteins and transition metal-based drugs.

The chapters in this book are based on lectures presented at an Advanced NATO Research Workshop on Molecular Modeling and Dynamics of Biological Molecules Containing Metal Ions (San Miniato, Pisa, Italy, March 15 - 21 1997), organized by Lucia Banci, Katalin Várnagy, Peter Comba and Gabor Naray-Szabo. The chapters include a review of new force field-based approaches and their application to the computation of structures, electronic properties and dynamics of bioinorganic compounds, the discussion of quantum chemical and integrated QM/MM methods for understanding metalloenzyme functions, the presentation of methods used to compare electrostatic interactions and the evaluation of their importance for enzyme reaction mechanisms and experimental studies. The wide variety of topics and the state-of-the-art approaches presented have stimulated the participants of the NATO workshop, and it is hoped that the same will be true for the readers of this book.

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SOLUTION STRUCTURES OF PROTEINS CONTAINING PARAMAGNETIC METAL IONS

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1. Introduction

Metal ions containing unpaired electrons (i.e. paramagnetic) are rather common in biological systems. In particular, electron transfer metalloproteins must have at least one redox state with unpaired electrons. The quantum-mechanical treatment of these systems is cumbersome and the results are uncertain [1,2], although the density functional approach has provided some interesting data [3].

The solution structure of proteins may normally be obtained by NMR spectroscopy [4,5]. The presence of metal ions containing unpaired electrons causes a broadening of NMR signals [6-9] and therefore makes it difficult to observe NOE's, from which upper distance limits are obtained. In macromolecular systems the line broadening due to paramagnetism depends on the electron relaxation time (τ_s), when the dominating mechanism is the electron-nucleus dipolar coupling [10,11], and on the magnetic field and the rotational correlation time of the molecule (τ_r), when the dominating mechanism is the dipolar coupling between the nucleus and the average magnetic moment induced by the external magnetic field on the metal ion [12,13]. The equation describing

the paramagnetic contribution to nuclear transversal relaxation due to the electron-nucleus dipolar coupling is [10,11]:

$$T_{2M}^{-1} = \frac{1}{15} \left(\frac{\mu_0}{4\pi} \right)^2 \frac{\gamma_I^2 g_e^2 \mu_B^2 S(S+1)}{r^6} \left[4\tau_s + \frac{13\tau_s}{1 + \omega_S^2 \tau_s^2} + \frac{3\tau_s}{1 + \omega_I^2 \tau_s^2} \right] \quad (1)$$

where S is the spin moment of the nucleus, γ_I is the gyromagnetic ratio of the nucleus, r is the metal to nucleus distance, τ_s is the correlation time for the electron relaxation, ω_I and ω_S are the Larmor frequencies of the nucleus and of the electron, respectively, and all other symbols have their usual meaning. In Table 1 the values of τ_s for various metal ions at room temperature are reported [7,9]. We have set 10^{-11} s as the upper limit of τ_s in order to obtain signal linewidths suitable for high resolution NMR. The other origin of line broadening is Curie relaxation, which is described by eqn. (2) [12,13]:

$$T_{2M}^{-1} = \frac{1}{5} \left(\frac{\mu_0}{4\pi} \right)^2 \frac{\omega_I^2 g_e^4 \mu_B^4 S^2 (S+1)^2}{(3kT)^2 r^6} \left(4\tau_r + \frac{3\tau_r}{1 + \omega_I^2 \tau_r^2} \right) \quad (2)$$

where S is the spin moment of the nucleus, r is the metal to nucleus distance, ω_I is the Larmor frequency of the nucleus, τ_r is the correlation time for the reorientation of the molecule, and all other symbols have their usual meaning. Due to this contribution, when $S > 1/2$ and the magnetic field higher than 500 MHz, the linewidths of the signals of protons close to the metal ion may be broadened beyond detection (depending on the value of τ_r). Indeed, it may happen that the signal of a given proton is detected at 90 MHz more easily than at 600 MHz [14]. Thus, the use of different magnetic fields may be required, depending on the nuclear shell around the metal that we want to focus on.

TABLE 1. Electronic relaxation rates for various paramagnetic metal ions. The line broadening is calculated for a proton at a 5 Å distance from the metal ion, at 500 MHz ^1H frequency, assuming the only contribution is that due to the electron-nucleus dipolar coupling (eqn. (1)). Metal ions for which high resolution NMR is feasible are in bold.

Metal ion	τ_s (s^{-1})	Line broadening (Hz)
Ti³⁺	10^{-10} - 10^{-11}	20-200
VO ²⁺	10^{-8}	10000
V³⁺	10^{-11}	50
V ²⁺	10^{-9}	5000
Cr ³⁺	$5 \cdot 10^{-9}$ - $5 \cdot 10^{-10}$	3000-25000
Cr²⁺	10^{-11} - 10^{-12}	20-150
Mn³⁺	10^{-10} - 10^{-11}	150-1500
Mn ²⁺	10^{-8}	100000
Fe³⁺ (H.S.)	10^{-9} - 10^{-11}	200-12000
Fe ³⁺ (L.S.)	10^{-11} - 10^{-13}	0.5-20
Fe ²⁺ (H.S.)	10^{-11} - 10^{-13}	5-150
Co ²⁺ (H.S.)	10^{-11} - 10^{-13}	2-100
Co ²⁺ (L.S.)	10^{-9} - 10^{-10}	200-1000
Ni ²⁺	10^{-10} - 10^{-12}	5-500
Cu ²⁺	10^{-9}	1000-5000
Ru³⁺	10^{-11} - 10^{-12}	2-20
Re³⁺	10^{-12} - 10^{-13}	5-20
Gd ³⁺	10^{-8} - 10^{-9}	20000-200000
Ln³⁺	10^{-12} - 10^{-13}	1-100

By using the density matrix formalism [15-17], it is possible to simulate most of the NMR experiments and to optimize either the pulse sequences or the various delays in a given pulse sequence, in order to maximize the signal intensities. With this procedure, the detection of distance constraints from NOE's

could be also pursued in unfavorable conditions. At this point the NMR experiment provides the necessary constraints to obtain the solution structure of the protein part [18-20]. We are now going to discuss the use of new additional constraints based on the electron-nucleus hyperfine coupling. These provide proton-metal ion distance information and allow for improving the resolution of the protein part and obtaining direct information on the metal coordinates within the protein frame [20]. A class of these constraints depends on the reciprocal sixth power of the metal to proton distance and another class on the reciprocal third power of the same distance. The different dependences on the distance may provide precious information related to protein mobility, as the two classes of constraints provide different average positions as a function of time.

These approaches allow researchers to obtain accurate solution structures, which may be the starting point for molecular dynamics simulations with the aim of (i) further refining the structure and (ii) providing models for mobility.

2. The proton-metal ion dipolar coupling

The presence of a paramagnetic center in a protein affects longitudinal nuclear relaxation times essentially through the electron-nucleus dipolar coupling [21], which is described by Solomon's law [10,11]:

$$T_{1M}^{-1} = \frac{2}{15} \left(\frac{\mu_0}{4\pi} \right)^2 \frac{\gamma_I^2 g_e^2 \mu_B^2 S(S+1)}{r^6} \left[\frac{7\tau_s}{1 + \omega_s^2 \tau_s^2} + \frac{3\tau_s}{1 + \omega_I^2 \tau_s^2} \right] \quad (3)$$

Eqns. (1) and (2) provide a tool for obtaining metal to proton constraints. It has been discussed [22-26] whether the recovery of magnetization in non-selective inversion-recovery experiments on proteins is exponential, and thus allow us (i) to estimate the diamagnetic contribution to nuclear T_1 values, and