

SENSITIZER-LINKED SUBSTRATES AS
PROBES OF HEME ENZYME STRUCTURE
AND CATALYSIS

Thesis by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Pasadena, California

2003

(Defended 15 May, 2003)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Caltech provided both my undergraduate and graduate education. Accordingly, I have a few more people to thank than usual. Bob Grubbs offered me (a freshman with few qualifications) a spot in his lab the first time we met, and has been incredibly supportive ever since. Geoff Coates was a dedicated and patient teacher, who taught me organic synthesis, and more importantly, to do “simple things that work.” John Bercaw, Dennis Dougherty, and Barbara Imperiali all taught inspiring courses that provided a large fraction of my scientific knowledge.

Harry Gray has been a fantastic advisor. I’ve benefited greatly from his generosity with his time, resources, and ideas, and enjoyed a unique degree of freedom in my research. I was (and am) particularly appreciative for the opportunity to work in his research group following my return to Caltech. Jay Winkler provided valuable help with time-resolved spectroscopy and data analysis. Doug Rees allowed me to use his laboratory equipment and taught me a great deal about protein structure. Our collaborators at Scripps, Anna-Maria Hays, Dave Goodin, Libby Getzoff, and Dave Stout, helped broaden my research horizons and have been a great bunch of people to work with.

I’ve been fortunate to work with many brilliant and kind fellow students and postdocs during my time in the Gray group. Ivan Dmochowski was an ideal mentor for a beginning graduate student. Brian Crane and Alex Bilwes were likewise generous with their time in teaching me protein crystallography. I’ve had a great time working (and not working) with Wendy Belliston, Brian Leigh, and Steve Contakes. In addition, I greatly appreciate the friendship of Libby Mayo, Jeremiah Miller, Xenia Amashukeli, Jeremy

Weaver, and Will Wehbi. During the past year of traveling back and forth between Stanford and Caltech, I've been hosted and treated royally by Brian, Wendy, Xenia, Libby, Jeremy, and Will. Thanks!

I thank those who had little to do with my research, but everything to do with my success. Kathryn Todd's help in proofreading this thesis is only the most recent example of the support and understanding she has given me during the past 5 years. My parents instilled in me an appreciation of knowledge and culture. My uncle, Michael Dunn, introduced me to research science by inviting me to work in his lab at UCR. Finally, I thank my grandfather, Fred Dunn, a self-taught archaeologist, geologist, and historian, whose example inspired his children and grandchildren to be curious about the world around them.

ABSTRACT

Ruthenium-diimine sensitizers (Ru-wires) with the structure $[\text{Ru}(\text{L}_2)\text{L}]^{2+}$, where L' is a perfluorobiphenyl bridge connecting 4,4'-dimethylbipyridine to the substrate adamantane or the heme ligand imidazole, bind to cytochrome P450cam with micromolar dissociation constants. Ru-wires can be used to trigger redox reactions on timescales faster than those achievable using conventional stopped-flow techniques: photoinduced heme reduction with an imidazole-terminated Ru-wire occurs in 40 ns. The large variation in ET rates among the Ru-diimine:P450 conjugates strongly supports a through-bonds model of Ru:heme electronic coupling.

The Ru-wires also bind the murine inducible nitric oxide synthase (NOS) oxidase domain, both in the active site and to the hydrophobic surface patch that interacts with the NOS reductase domain. Rhenium-diimine probes with the structure $[\text{Re}(4,7\text{-dimethyl phenanthroline})(\text{CO})_3\text{L}]^+$, where L = imidazole- C_{12}F_8 -imidazole (Re-im) or imidazole- C_{12}F_9 (Re-F₉bp), bind in the NOS active site. Re-im ($K_d = 6$ nM) ligates the heme iron. Re-F₉bp ($K_d = 3.4$ μM) produces a partial low- to high-spin conversion of the heme. Compounds with properties similar to the Ru- and Re-diimine probes may provide novel means of NOS inhibition.

Luminescent dansyl probes were designed to target cytochrome P450cam. D-4-Ad (dansyl- C_4 -adamantane) luminescence is quenched by Förster energy transfer upon binding ($K_d = 0.83$ μM), but is restored when the probe is displaced from the active site by camphor. In contrast, D-8-Ad ($K_d \sim 0.02$ μM) is not displaced from the enzyme even in the presence of a large excess of camphor. Probes with properties similar to those of D-4-Ad potentially could be useful for screening P450 inhibitors.

Crystal structures of P450cam bound to ruthenium diimine and dansyl probes reveal an open enzyme conformation that allows substrate access to the active center via a 22-Å deep channel. Interactions of the probes with the channel illustrate the importance of exploiting protein dynamics in inhibitor design. Movements of the F, G and B' helices couple to conformational changes in active site residues implicated in proton pumping and dioxygen activation. Common conformational states among P450cam and homologous enzymes indicate that the structural flexibility of the F/G helix region allows the 54 human P450s to oxidize diverse substrates.

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