

[Fe(CNXyl)₄]^{2−}: An Isolable and Structurally Characterized Homoleptic Isocyanidemetalate Dianion**

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Dedicated to Professor Robert G. Bergman on the occasion of his 65th birthday

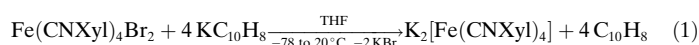
Malatesta noted nearly 50 years ago that homoleptic isocyanidemetalates were unknown but potentially very interesting species^[1] as a result of their formal similarity to the long-established carbonylmatalates.^[2] Almost 30 years later, Warkock and Cooper announced the synthesis and full characterization of the first example, [Co(CNXyl)₄][−] (Xyl = 2,6-dimethylphenyl).^[3] Subsequently, related monoanionic complexes were established, including [Mn(CNXyl)₅][−],^[4] [V(CNXyl)₆][−],^[5] and [Ta(CNXyl)₆][−].^[6] Cooper and co-workers also reported on quite thermally unstable isocyanideruthenates, and provisionally formulated these species as the first dianions of this class, [Ru(CNR)₄]^{2−} (R = Xyl and *t*Bu).^[7] Neither salt could be isolated, and their characterizations were mainly based on their reactions with suitable main-group halides, E-X, to afford appropriate products, that is, Ru(CNR)₄E₂.^[8] However, because derivative data can be unreliable indicators of the true nature of a highly reduced metalate precursor,^[9] we report herein the first proof for the existence of a homoleptic isocyanide dianion. This work involves the synthesis, isolation, and structural characterization of [Fe(CNXyl)₄]^{2−}, an unprecedented iron isocyanide analogue of the first metal carbonyl anion, [Fe(CO)₄]^{2−}.^[2,10]

Reduction of iron(II) bromide in the presence of four equivalents of CNXyl by four equivalents of potassium naphthalene in tetrahydrofuran (THF) at −78 °C afforded an intensely bright red reaction mixture, from which thermally stable but quite air-sensitive unsolvated K₂[Fe(CNXyl)₄] (**1**) was isolated in about 70 % yield as a satisfactorily pure brick red powder (Equation (1); see the

gave a product that was too thermally unstable to isolate or spectroscopically characterize. However, this species reacted with triphenyltin chloride to provide a product consistent with its formulation as a dipotassium salt of [Fe(CN*t*Bu)₄]^{2−} (**2**; see below).

¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra of **1** in solution showed unexceptional resonances characteristic of the aromatic and aliphatic groups present in the coordinated xylyl isocyanide ligands. In addition, a ¹³C NMR resonance at δ = 238.7 ppm was observed and assigned to the ligated isocyanide carbon. Interestingly, this δ_C value is the most downfield carbon resonance previously observed for a terminal isocyanide ligand in a diamagnetic compound. Because ligated carbon ¹³C NMR resonances of isocyanides tend to shift downfield as metal centers assume lower oxidation states,^[11] it is reasonable that **1**, formally containing Fe^{II−}, should have a more downfield (positive) isocyanide carbon resonance position than the previous “record” value of δ = 210.4 ppm reported for the Ta^{I−} complex, [Ta(CNXyl)₆][−].^[6] Carbonyl ¹³C NMR resonances of homoleptic metal carbonyls also move downfield as the formal oxidation state of the metal decreases,^[12] and it is interesting that the previously unreported carbonyl carbon shift of K₂[Fe(CO)₄] at 20 °C in [D₆]DMSO (δ_C = 234.6 ppm)^[13] is not greatly different from that observed for **1**. More evidence for the electron-rich character of **1** is its IR spectrum in THF that exhibits a broad intense absorption at very low energy, 1670 cm^{−1}, which is assigned to the isocyanide CN stretching frequency. In contrast, homoleptic isocyanidemetalate monoanions have infrared ν(CN) bands at appreciably higher energies; for example, for [Ta(CNXyl)₆][−] the value is 1812 cm^{−1},^[6] indicative of significantly less metal-to-isocyanide back-bonding in this higher-valent species, relative to that in **1**.

A single-crystal X-ray study on **1**, as the [K-([2.2.2]cryptand)]⁺ salt, revealed undistorted cations that were well-separated from the anion.^[14] The latter contained four discrete CNXyl ligands and was only marginally perturbed by the roughly spherical counterions. Essentially linear Fe-C-N units (av 173(1)°) and a nearly tetrahedral FeC₄ core were present in **1**, appropriate for a d¹⁰-iron(II−) complex (Figure 1). Despite the rather bulky character of the isocyanide ligand, the average Fe-C bond length in **1** of 1.765(3) Å was only slightly longer than the corresponding value of 1.742(6) Å reported for Na₂[Fe(CO)₄]·3/2(dioxane).^[15] These data suggest that CNXyl and CO have similar acceptor abilities in the two subvalent iron complexes.^[16,17] Another measure of metal-to-ligand back-bonding in **1** is the average isocyanide C-N bond length of 1.237(7) Å, which is appreciably longer than analogous bond lengths found in homoleptic



Experimental Section for details). In contrast, analogous reductions of FeBr₂ in the presence of *tert*-butylisocyanide

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[**] Highly Reduced Organometallics, Part 59. This work was supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation and the donors of the Petroleum Research Fund, administered by the American Chemical Society. We thank Christine Lundby for expert assistance in the preparation of this manuscript. Part 58: W. W. Brennessel, V. G. Young, Jr., J. E. Ellis, *Angew. Chem.* **2006**, *118*, 7426; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2006**, *45*, 7268. Xyl = 2,6-dimethylphenyl.

Supporting information for this article is available on the WWW under <http://www.angewandte.org> or from the author.

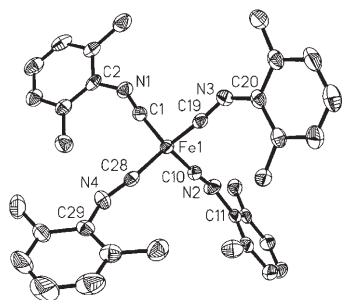


Figure 1. Molecular structure of **1** (cations not shown). Thermal ellipsoids are set at the 50% probability level, with hydrogen atoms omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths [Å] and angles [°]: Fe–C1 1.761(3), Fe–C10 1.766(3), Fe–C19 1.763(3), Fe–C28 1.768(3), C1–N1 1.230(4), C10–N2 1.233(4), C19–N3 1.246(4), C28–N4 1.237(4); C1–N1–C2 143.3(3), C10–N2–C11 144.6(3), C19–N3–C20 139.9(3), C28–N4–C29 147.3(3), av Fe–C–N 173(1), av C–Fe–C 109(5).

isocyanidemetalate monoanions,^[18] such as $[\text{V}(\text{CNXyl})_6]^-$ (av 1.20(2) Å),^[5] or free CNXyl (1.160(3) Å).^[19] Finally, the substantially electron-rich character of anion **1** is evident by its unusually nonlinear isocyanide C–N–C units, which have an average angle of 144(3)°. Thus, both structural and spectroscopic data point to a high degree of metal-to-isocyanide back-bonding in **1** and these correlate with significant bending at the nitrogen atoms in the coordinated isocyanides.^[20,21]

Because $[\text{Fe}(\text{CO})_4]^{2-}$ was reported to react with triphenyltin chloride to provide an unusually robust and well-characterized product, *cis*- $[\text{Fe}(\text{CO})_4(\text{SnPh}_3)_2]$,^[22] corresponding reactions of **1**, and the unstable intermediate postulated to be **2**, were carried out and these gave the analogous air-stable products, $[\text{Fe}(\text{CNR})_4(\text{SnPh}_3)_2]$ (R = Xyl: **3**; R = *t*Bu: **4**) in about 60% isolated yields.^[23] In contrast to the carbonyl complex, IR and NMR spectral data indicated that **3** and **4** were only present as *trans* isomers, likely because the isocyanides are poorer acceptors and bulkier ligands than carbon monoxide. Because no complexes of the general formula $[\text{M}(\text{CNR})_4\text{L}_2]^{2-}$, for L = SnR_3' and related Group 14 based ligands, had been structurally characterized previously, single-crystal X-ray studies were carried out on **3** and **4** to verify their structures (Figure 2).^[24] Both compounds show essentially identical $\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_4\text{Sn}_2$ core structures of nearly D_{4h} symmetry, with experimentally indistinguishable average Fe–C and isocyanide C–N bond lengths of 1.851(6) and 1.162(5) Å, respectively. Corresponding Fe–C and C–N bond lengths in **1** are about 0.09-Å shorter and 0.08-Å longer, respectively, than those in **3** and **4** as a result of the much greater degree of $d\pi(\text{Fe})$ -to- $p\pi^*(\text{CN})$ back-bonding present in **1**. Changes in the isocyanide stretching frequencies, $\nu(\text{CN})$, and ^{13}C NMR shifts for ligated carbon atoms, δ_{C} , in moving from subvalent iron complex **1** to formally divalent iron complexes **3** and **4** are also in accord with expectations based on the classic Chatt–Dewar–Duncanson model for back-bonding.^[25] Other interatomic data of the structures for **3** and **4** are unexceptional, including the average Fe–Sn bond lengths of 2.565(1) and 2.529(3) Å, respectively, which are within the range of values of 2.526(3)^[26] to 2.661(7) Å^[22] previously reported for triphenylstannyliron complexes.

In summary, we have isolated and structurally characterized a homoleptic isocyanidemetalate dianion, $[\text{Fe}(\text{CNXyl})_4]^{2-}$, for the first time. Data from IR and NMR spectroscopy and X-ray studies show that the formal d^{10} -iron(II–) center participates in back-bonding to the isocyanides to the greatest extent previously observed for isolable homoleptic isocyanide complexes containing only terminally bound ligands. Thus, among these homoleptic species, $[\text{Fe}(\text{CNXyl})_4]^{2-}$ has the lowest known isocyanide stretching frequency of 1670 cm^{-1} , the most downfield isocyanide ligated carbon ^{13}C NMR resonance ($\delta = 238.7$ ppm), the longest isocyanide C–N bond length of 1.237(7) Å, and the greatest degree of bending at the isocyanide nitrogen atoms (average C–N–C angle of 144(3)°). Here we have emphasized qualitative similarities between $[\text{Fe}(\text{CNXyl})_4]^{2-}$ and $[\text{Fe}(\text{CO})_4]^{2-}$. In metal carbonyl chemistry, more highly reduced species are known, such as $[\text{Mn}(\text{CO})_4]^{3-}$ and $[\text{Cr}(\text{CO})_4]^{4-}$,^[2,27] so it will be of considerable interest to determine whether analogous isocyanide complexes are accessible.

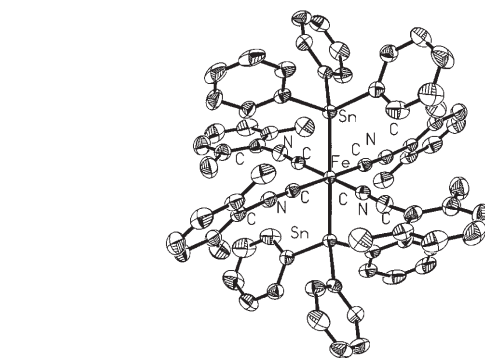


Figure 2. Molecular structure of **3**. Thermal ellipsoids are set at the 50% probability level, with hydrogen atoms omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths [Å] and angles [°]: Fe–Sn 2.5663(5), av Fe–C 1.850(4), av isocyanide C–N 1.165(5), av C–N–C 174(1), av Fe–C–N 178(1), av *cis* C–Fe–C 90(1), av *trans* C–Fe–C 180.0(2), Sn–Fe–Sn 180.0.

Experimental Section

1: Treatment of an orange solution of anhydrous FeBr_2 (0.500 g, 2.32 mmol) in THF (50 mL) with CNXyl (1.247 g, 9.51 mmol) provided a clear red-violet solution of *cis*- and *trans*- $\text{Fe}(\text{CNXyl})_4\text{Br}_2$.^[13] This solution was cooled to -78°C and added to a deep green solution of potassium naphthalene ($[\text{K}][\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_8]$, 9.27 mmol) in THF (50 mL) at -78°C . The resulting bright red reaction mixture was slowly warmed to room temperature over a period of about 12 h, filtered to remove KBr, and evaporated under vacuum to dryness. Trituration of the residue with diethyl ether (1 × 50 mL, 1 × 20 mL), followed by drying in vacuo, afforded a brick red powder (1.084 g, 71% yield based on FeBr_2), which proved to be satisfactorily pure, unsolvated $\text{K}_2[\text{Fe}(\text{CNXyl})_4]$ (**1**). Elemental analysis (%) calcd for $\text{C}_{36}\text{H}_{36}\text{FeK}_2\text{N}_4$: C 65.64, H 5.51, N 8.51; found: C 65.60, H 5.59, N 8.83; m.p. 148–155 $^\circ\text{C}$ (decomp); IR (THF): $\tilde{\nu} = 1675$ cm^{-1} (vs br; CN); ^1H NMR (300 MHz, $[\text{D}_8]\text{THF}$, 20°C): $\delta = 2.45$ (s, 6H, CH_3), 6.48 (t, 1H, *p*-CNXyl), 6.73 ppm (d, 2H, *m*-CNXyl); $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR (75 MHz, $[\text{D}_8]\text{THF}$, 20°C): $\delta = 21.2$ (s, CH_3), 119.6 (s, *p*-CNXyl), 127.9 (s, *m*-CNXyl), 131.5 (s, *o*-CNXyl), 141.1 (s, *ipso*-CNXyl), 238.7 ppm (s, CNXyl). Assignments were confirmed by HMQC 2D NMR spectroscopy. Attempts to grow X-ray quality crystals of **1** from several solvents failed. However, addition of [2.2.2]cryptand (0.090 g) to a solution of **1** (0.075 g) in hexamethylphosphoramide (HMPA, 10 mL), followed by layering with excess THF at 0°C , resulted in growth of suitable single crystals of $[\text{K}][2.2.2]\text{cryptand}][\text{Fe}(\text{CNXyl})_4]$ in about 24 h. These revealed identical spectroscopic properties to **1**, without cation.

3: Preparation was identical to that shown in detail for **4** below, except pure **1** was combined with two equivalents of Ph_3SnCl in THF. The isolated yield of satisfactorily pure **3** was 60% based on **1**. Elemental analysis (C, H, N) results were satisfactory; m.p. 250–252 °C (decomp). Selected spectral data: IR (THF): $\tilde{\nu}$ = 2055 (vs), 2008 cm^{-1} (sh, CN); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3 , 20 °C): δ = 179.3 (s, CNXyl); normal carbon resonances due to Ph_3Sn and xyllyl groups were also observed; ^{119}Sn NMR (186 MHz, CDCl_3 , 20 °C, ext. ref. SnMe_4): δ = 14.4 ppm (s). Pale yellow plates of **3** were grown from a pentane-layered THF solution at 0 °C for the X-ray study.^[24]

4: Addition of $t\text{BuNC}$ (1.0 mL, 9.6 mmol) to FeBr_2 (0.500 g, 2.32 mmol) in THF (50 mL) produced a red-violet solution, which was cooled to –78 °C and added to KC_{10}H_8 (9.27 mmol) in THF (50 mL) at –78 °C. Ph_3SnCl (1.787 g, 4.64 mmol) in THF (30 mL, –78 °C) was rapidly added to the resulting dark solution to afford a dark reddish yellow reaction mixture, which was warmed to 20 °C over a period of 12 h. Following filtration, solvent was removed in vacuo and the product was vigorously washed with heptane, then pentane, and dried in vacuo to afford **4** as a satisfactorily pure light yellow powder (1.511 g, 60% based on FeBr_2). Elemental analysis (C, H, N) results were satisfactory; m.p. 198 °C. Selected spectral data: IR (oil mull): $\tilde{\nu}$ = 2098 (s), 2065 cm^{-1} (s); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3 , 20 °C): δ = 166.3 (s, $\text{CN}t\text{Bu}$), normal carbon resonances due to $t\text{BuNC}$ and Ph_3Sn groups were also observed; ^{119}Sn NMR (186 MHz, CDCl_3 , 20 °C, ext. ref. SnMe_4): δ = 41.7 ppm (s). Colorless blocks of **4** were grown from a pentane-layered THF solution at 0 °C for the X-ray study.^[24]

Received: September 12, 2006

Published online: December 7, 2006

Keywords: anions · iron · isocyanide ligands · reduction · subvalent compounds

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