## Subvalent Compounds

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## [Fe(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>2-</sup>: An Isolable and Structurally Characterized Homoleptic Isocyanidemetalate Dianion\*\*

William W. Brennessel and John E. Ellis\*

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<sup>[1]</sup> as a result of their formal similarity to the longestablished carbonylmetalates.<sup>[2]</sup> Almost 30 years later, Warnock and Cooper announced the synthesis and full characterization of the first example,  $[Co(CNXyl)_4]^-(Xyl = 2,6$ -dimethylphenyl).<sup>[3]</sup> Subsequently, related monoanionic complexes were established, including  $[Mn(CNXyl)_5]^{-,[4]}$ (CNXyl)<sub>6</sub>]<sup>-</sup>,<sup>[5]</sup> and [Ta(CNXyl)<sub>6</sub>]<sup>-,[6]</sup> Cooper and co-workers also reported on quite thermally unstable isocyanideruthenates, and provisionally formulated these species as the first dianions of this class,  $[Ru(CNR)_4]^{2-}$   $(R = Xyl \text{ and } tBu).^{[7]}$ Neither salt could be isolated, and their characterizations were mainly based on their reactions with suitable maingroup halides, E-X, to afford appropriate products, that is, Ru(CNR)<sub>4</sub>E<sub>2</sub>. [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)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>2-</sup>, an unprecedented iron isocyanide analogue of the first metal carbonyl anion, [Fe(CO)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>2-.[2,10]</sup>

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  $K_2$ [Fe-(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>] (1) was isolated in about 70% yield as a satisfactorily pure brick red powder (Equation (1); see the

$$Fe(CNXyl)_4 Br_2 + 4\,KC_{10} H_8 \xrightarrow[-78\,\text{to}\,20\,^{\circ}C,\,-2\,\text{KBr}} K_2 [Fe(CNXyl)_4] + 4\,C_{10} H_8 \quad \ (1)$$

Experimental Section for details). In contrast, analogous reductions of FeBr<sub>2</sub> in the presence of *tert*-butylisocyanide

[\*] W. W. Brennessel, Prof. J. E. Ellis Department of Chemistry University of Minnesota Minneapolis, MN 55455 (USA) Fax: (+1) 612-625-7541 E-mail: ellis@chem.umn.edu

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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  $[Fe(CNtBu)_4]^{2-}$  (2; see below).

<sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C 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 <sup>13</sup>C NMR resonance at  $\delta = 238.7$  ppm was observed and assigned to the ligated isocyanide carbon. Interestingly, this  $\delta_{\rm C}$  value is the most downfield carbon resonance previously observed for a terminal isocyanide ligand in a diamagnetic compound. Because ligated carbon <sup>13</sup>C NMR resonances of isocyanides tend to shift downfield as metal centers assume lower oxidation states,[11] it is reasonable that 1, formally containing Fe<sup>II-</sup>, should have a more downfield (positive) isocyanide carbon resonance position than the previous "record" value of  $\delta$ = 210.4 ppm reported for the Ta<sup>I-</sup> complex, [Ta(CNXyl)<sub>6</sub>]<sup>-</sup>.<sup>[6]</sup> Carbonyl <sup>13</sup>C 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 K<sub>2</sub>[Fe(CO)<sub>4</sub>] at 20°C in  $[D_6]DMSO (\delta_C = 234.6 \text{ ppm})^{[13]}$  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<sup>-1</sup>, which is assigned to the isocyanide CN stretching frequency. In contrast, homoleptic isocyanidemetalate monoanions have infrared  $\nu(CN)$  bands at appreciably higher energies; for example, for [Ta(CNXyl)<sub>6</sub>]<sup>-</sup> the value is 1812 cm<sup>-1</sup>, [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)]<sup>+</sup> salt, revealed undistorted cations that were well-separated from the anion.<sup>[14]</sup> 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 FeC<sub>4</sub> core were present in 1, appropriate for a  $d^{10}$ -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 Na<sub>2</sub>[Fe(CO)<sub>4</sub>]·3/2(dioxane).<sup>[15]</sup> 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

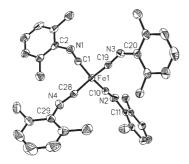


Figure 1. Molecular structure of 1 (cations not shown). Thermal ellipsoids are set at the 50% probability level, with hydrogen atoms omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths [Å] and angles [°]: Fe–C1 1.761(3), Fe–C10 1.766(3), Fe–C19 1.763(3), Fe–C28 1.768(3), C1–N1 1.230(4), C10–N2 1.233(4), C19–N3 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, <sup>[18]</sup> such as  $[V(CNXyI)_6]^-$  (av 1.20(2) Å), <sup>[5]</sup> or free CNXyl (1.160(3) Å). <sup>[19]</sup> 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. <sup>[20,21]</sup>

Because [Fe(CO)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>2-</sup> was reported to react with triphenyltin chloride to provide an unusually robust and wellcharacterized product, cis-[Fe(CO)<sub>4</sub>(SnPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], [22] corresponding reactions of 1, and the unstable intermediate postulated to be 2, were carried out and these gave the analogous air-stable products,  $[Fe(CNR)_4(SnPh_3)_2]$  (R = Xyl: 3; R = tBu: 4) in about 60% isolated yields.<sup>[23]</sup> 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  $[M(CNR)_4L_2]^z$ , 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).<sup>[24]</sup> Both compounds show essentially identical Fe(CN)<sub>4</sub>Sn<sub>2</sub> 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  $d\pi(Fe)$ -to- $p\pi^*(CN)$  back-bonding present in 1. Changes in the isocyanide stretching frequencies,  $\nu(CN)$ , and  $^{13}$ C NMR shifts for ligated carbon atoms,  $\delta_{\rm C}$ , 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 backbonding. [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  $2.661(7) \text{ Å}^{[22]}$ previously reported for triphenylstannyliron complexes.

In summary, we have isolated and structurally characterized a homoleptic isocyanidemetalate dianion, [Fe-

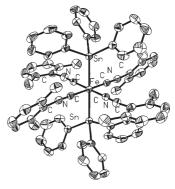


Figure 2. Molecular structure of 3. Thermal ellipsoids are set at the 50% probability level, with hydrogen atoms omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths [Å] and angles [°]: Fe–Sn 2.5663(5), av Fe–C 1.850(4), av isocyanide C–N 1.165(5), av C-N-C 174(1), av Fe-C-N 178(1), av cis C-Fe-C 90(1), av trans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

(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>2-</sup>, for the first time. Data from IR and NMR spectroscopy and X-ray studies show that the formal d<sup>10</sup>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, [Fe-(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>2-</sup> has the lowest known isocyanide stretching frequency of 1670 cm<sup>-1</sup>, 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  $[Fe(CNXyl)_4]^{2-}$  and  $[Fe(CO)_4]^{2-}$ . In metal carbonyl chemistry, more highly reduced species are known, such as  $[Mn(CO)_4]^{3-}$  and  $[Cr(CO)_4]^{4-}$ , [2,27] so it will be of considerable interest to determine whether analogous isocyanide complexes are accessible.

## **Experimental Section**

1: Treatment of an orange solution of anhydrous FeBr<sub>2</sub> (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-Fe-(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>Br<sub>2</sub>.<sup>[13]</sup> This solution was cooled to -78 °C and added to a deep green solution of potassium naphthalene (K[C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>8</sub>], 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  $(1 \times 50 \text{ mL}, 1 \times 20 \text{ mL})$ , followed by drying in vacuo, afforded a brick red powder (1.084 g, 71% yield based on FeBr<sub>2</sub>), which proved to be satisfactorily pure, unsolvated K<sub>2</sub>[Fe(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>] (1). Elemental analysis (%) calcd for C<sub>36</sub>H<sub>36</sub>FeK<sub>2</sub>N<sub>4</sub>: C 65.64, H 5.51, N 8.51; found: C 65.60, H 5.59, N 8.83; m.p. 148–155 °C (decomp); IR (THF):  $\tilde{v} = 1675 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  (vs br; CN); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, [D<sub>8</sub>]THF, 20 °C):  $\delta = 2.45$  (s, 6H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 6.48 (t, 1 H, p-CNXyl), 6.73 ppm (d, 2 H, m-CNXyl); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (75 MHz, [D<sub>8</sub>]THF, 20°C):  $\delta = 21.2$  (s, CH<sub>3</sub>), 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 [K([2.2.2]cryptand)]<sub>2</sub>[Fe(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>] in about 24 h. These revealed identical spectroscopic properties to 1, without

## **Communications**

- 3: Preparation was identical to that shown in detail for 4 below, except pure 1 was combined with two equivalents of Ph<sub>3</sub>SnCl 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<sup>-1</sup> (sh, CN); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 20 °C):  $\delta$  = 179.3 (s, CNXyl); normal carbon resonances due to Ph<sub>3</sub>Sn and xylyl groups were also observed; <sup>119</sup>Sn NMR (186 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 20 °C, ext. ref. SnMe<sub>4</sub>):  $\delta$  = 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. <sup>[24]</sup>
- 4: Addition of tBuNC (1.0 mL, 9.6 mmol) to FeBr<sub>2</sub> (0.500 g,  $2.32\ \text{mmol})$  in THF (50 mL) produced a red-violet solution, which was cooled to -78°C and added to KC<sub>10</sub>H<sub>8</sub> (9.27 mmol) in THF (50 mL) at -78 °C. Ph<sub>3</sub>SnCl (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<sub>2</sub>). Elemental analysis (C,H,N) results were satisfactory; m.p. 198 °C. Selected spectral data: IR (oil mull):  $\tilde{v} = 2098$  (s), 2065 cm<sup>-1</sup> (s); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 20 °C):  $\delta = 166.3$  (s, CNtBu), normal carbon resonances due to tBuNC and Ph<sub>3</sub>Sn groups were also observed; <sup>119</sup>Sn NMR (186 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 20 °C, ext. ref. SnMe<sub>4</sub>):  $\delta = 41.7$  ppm (s). Colorless blocks of **4** were grown from a pentane-layered THF solution at 0°C for the X-ray study.[24]

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- [14] Crystal structure analysis, **1**: [K([2.2.2]cryptand)]<sub>2</sub>[Fe(CNXyl)<sub>4</sub>]:  $C_{72}H_{108}\text{Fe}K_2N_8O_{12}$ ; monoclinic;  $P2_1/n$ ; dark red plates; a=13.264(1), b=24.701(2), c=22.867(2) Å;  $\beta=94.417(2)^\circ$ ; V=7470(1) Å<sup>3</sup>; Z=4; T=173(2) K;  $\lambda=0.71073$  Å; 43 309 reflections, 13 203 independent; R1=0.0468 ( $I>2\sigma(I)$ ), wR2=0.1301 (for all data);  $\mu=0.377$  mm<sup>-1</sup> (SADABS); full matrix, least squares on  $F^2$ . CCDC 617973 (**1**), 617974 (**3**), and 617975 (**4**) contain the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge from The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data\_request/cif.
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- [21] Although the average C-N-C angle in 1 is the smallest known for terminal isocyanides in a homoleptic complex, a heteroleptic Ta(I) species, namely [Ta(CNMe)<sub>2</sub>(dmpe)<sub>2</sub>Cl] (dmpe=1,2-bis (dimethylphosphano)ethane) apparently holds the record for this value. It has an average C-N-C angle of 122.0(7)°, and the isocyanides in this complex were considered to be essentially bound heteroallenes, that is, M=C=NR. See: E. M. Carnahan, S. J. Lippard, J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1992, 114, 466.
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- [23] However, despite this and prior promising results,<sup>[7]</sup> no homoleptic alkylisocyanidemetalates have been established in the scientific literature.
- [24] Crystal structure analyses, **3**:  $C_{72}H_{66}FeN_4Sn_2$ ; triclinic;  $P\bar{1}$ ; pale yellow plates; a=12.668(2), b=12.733(2), c=20.026(3) Å,  $\alpha=87.026(3)$ ,  $\beta=89.783(3)$ ,  $\gamma=72.945(3)^\circ$ ; V=3076.2(9) ų; Z=2; T=173(2) K;  $\lambda=0.71073$  Å; 25,200 reflections, 10817 independent; R1=0.0387 (I>2 $\sigma$ (I)), wR2=0.1125 (for all data);  $\mu=1.083$  mm<sup>-1</sup> (SADABS); full matrix, least squares on  $F^2$ . **4**:  $C_{56}H_{66}FeN_4Sn_2$ ; monoclinic;  $P2_1/n$ ; colorless block; a=14.209(2), b=18.501(2), c=20.635(3) Å;  $\beta=95.846(2)^\circ$ ; V=5396(1) ų; Z=4; T=173(2) K;  $\lambda=0.71073$ ; 61495 reflections, 12368 independent; RI=0.0302 ( $I>2\sigma(I)$ ,  $wR_2=0.0586$  (for all data);  $\mu=1.221$  mm<sup>-1</sup> (SADABS); full matrix, least squares on  $F^2$ . See Ref. [14b] for CCDC numbers of **3** and **4**, and related information.
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