University of Groningen

Defocused Imaging of UV-Driven Surface-Bound Molecular Motors

Krajnik, Bartosz; Chen, Jiawen; Watson, Matthew A.; Cockroft, Scott L.; Feringa, Ben L.; Hofkens, Johan

Published in:
Journal of the American Chemical Society

DOI:
[10.1021/jacs.7b02758](https://doi.org/10.1021/jacs.7b02758)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2017

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Krajnik, B., Chen, J., Watson, M. A., Cockroft, S. L., Feringa, B. L., & Hofkens, J. (2017). Defocused Imaging of UV-Driven Surface-Bound Molecular Motors. *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, 139(21), 7156-7159. <https://doi.org/10.1021/jacs.7b02758>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Defocused Imaging of UV-Driven Surface-Bound Molecular Motors

Bartosz Krajnik,^{†,‡,§,⊥} Jiawen Chen,^{‡,⊥} Matthew A. Watson,^{§,⊥} Scott L. Cockroft,[§] Ben L. Feringa,^{*,‡,⊥} and Johan Hofkens^{*,†,⊥}[†]Molecular Imaging and Photonics, Department of Chemistry, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 3000 Leuven, Belgium[‡]Centre for Systems Chemistry, Stratingh Institute for Chemistry, University of Groningen, 9712 CP Groningen, The Netherlands[§]EaStCHEM School of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh, Joseph Black Building, David Brewster Road, Edinburgh EH9 3FJ, United Kingdom[⊥]Institute of Physics, Faculty of Physics, Astronomy and Informatics, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Grudziadzka 5, 87-100 Torun, Poland

S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Synthetic molecular motors continue to attract great interest due to their ability to transduce energy into nanomechanical motion, the potential to do work and drive systems out-of-equilibrium. Of particular interest are unidirectional rotary molecular motors driven by chemical fuel or light. Probing the mechanistic details of their operation at the single-molecule level is hampered by the diffraction limit, which prevents the collection of dynamic positional information by traditional optical methods. Here, we use defocused wide-field imaging to examine the unidirectional rotation of individual molecular rotary motors on a quartz surface in unprecedented detail. The sequential occupation of nanomechanical states during the UV and heat-induced cycle of rotation are directly imaged in real-time. The approach will undoubtedly prove important in elucidating the mechanistic details and assessing the utility of novel synthetic molecular motors in the future.

Many techniques offer insight into the operation of molecular machines at an ensemble level.^{1–5} Advanced techniques can reveal subdiffraction limit detail.^{6–8} Translational and rotational motion of relatively large biological motors can even be monitored at the single-molecule level.^{9–11} However, such approaches often require complicated methods for synchronizing molecular behavior, and the dynamics of individual molecules, including the ordering of events and reverse steps, often cannot be observed. Indeed, as the dimensions of chemical bonds are well below the diffraction limit of light, direct imaging of mechanistic detail at the single-bond level still presents a great challenge not easily met with optical methods.^{12,13} Defocused wide-field imaging allows the diffraction limit to be circumvented.¹⁴ The orientation of individual fluorophores can be determined from the pattern of photons projected beyond the focal plane of the object upon laser excitation.^{15,16} Defocused imaging has been used to study rotational diffusion in polymers,¹⁷ the relative orientations of emitters in dendrimers,^{18,19} ligand-protein interactions,²⁰ membrane organization²¹ and the optical biasing of surface-bound molecular rotors.²² Furthermore, the approach enables simultaneous observation of multiple emitters and multicolor

imaging. We sought to take inspiration from the seminal study in which the rotary motion of single ATPase protein motors was directly observed in real-time.¹¹ We addressed the challenge of monitoring the rotation of an individual synthetic light-driven molecular rotary motor and elucidating the details of the rotary cycle.

We present defocused wide-field imaging studies that show the UV-driven rotation of surface-bound molecular motors (Figure 1). Molecular motors based on overcrowded alkenes

Figure 1. (a) Structure of the surface-bound molecular motor (motor 1) used in the present study. When irradiated with UV light the rotor underwent rotation in the plane of the glass via a series of kinetically trapped states that have different orientations relative to the initial position of the rotor. (b) Orientations were revealed via wide-field defocused fluorescence microscopy,^{23,27} followed by matching of the experimentally determined emission patterns to calculated model patterns.

have been extensively investigated at an ensemble level and are capable of performing macroscopic work via their collective unidirectional rotation when aligned at interfaces and within other anisotropic environments like liquid crystals or polymer gels.^{23–26} The mechanism of rotation has been well studied both theoretically²⁷ and experimentally.²⁸ As such, they provide an ideal model system to demonstrate the capacity of defocused wide-field imaging to examine dynamic nanomechanical

Received: March 24, 2017

Published: May 12, 2017

behavior at the single-molecule level. The structure of motor **1** is shown in Figure 1a.²⁹ The upper half of the motor, which serves as the rotor, is appended with a bright, stable perylene diimide fluorophore.

A rigid phenyl-ethylene oligomer linker was used to prevent possible fluorescence quenching between the motor core and the dipole emitter. The lower half of the motor bears tetrapodal carboxylate legs permitting the motor to be grafted to an amine-coated glass surface via electrostatic interactions, and was considered as the stator. The modified glass surface was coated with a spin-cast polymer film to protect the emitters from environmental degradation and to slow rotation to a rate that permitted resolution of the different states. One laser ($\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 375$ nm) drove rotation of the motor molecules, while a second laser ($\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 532$ nm) induced fluorescence of the dipoles.

The fluorescence from a single emitter is structured and anisotropic in space. A displacement of the microscope objective by $\sim 1 \mu\text{m}$ with respect to the focal plane of the emitters allowed the angular distribution of the emitted fluorescence to be translated into an intensity pattern on the detector, which revealed information about the 3D orientation of the transition dipole moment of the emitter (Figure 1b). The expected emission pattern for every angular distribution of photons in terms of the in-plane (Φ) and out-of-plane (θ) angular component can be calculated simply. Thus, fitting and cross-correlation of the measured to calculated patterns enabled the orientations of the individual emitters to be derived.

The UV-driven unidirectional rotation of the motor core is shown in Figure 2. In a racemic population of motors, both enantiomers are present and thus, across the population unidirectional rotation in both senses occurs. Here, anticlockwise rotation of the rotor is depicted relative to the stator which is considered fixed for simplicity (Figure 2). The molecule is depicted as for surface bound motors seen through an inverted

Figure 2. Unidirectional rotation of molecular motor **1** (single enantiomer shown). In solution, the motor rotates through a four-state cycle involving photochemical isomerization steps (purple arrows) each followed by an irreversible thermal helix inversion step (red arrows), involving relative changes of in-plane-angle of $\sim 120^\circ$ and $\sim 60^\circ$, respectively. The large red arrows indicate the orientation of the dipole emitter.

microscope; looking through the stator along the axis of rotation. Upon UV irradiation, a photochemical isomerization of the central double bond occurs, which results in a $\sim 120^\circ$ in-plane rotation of the rotor from the initial state **1-P**. The obtained state **1-M** is unstable due to high steric strain. The molecule can exit this unstable state **1-M** either by photoisomerization back to **1-P** (the *E-Z* photoisomerization is fully reversible under constant laser irradiation) or via a thermally activated helix inversion (THI) step, which involves a $\sim 60^\circ$ in-plane rotation of the rotor, affording a more stable state **1-P'**. Photoisomerization to **1-M'** followed by THI to **1-P** completes the rotary cycle. Concurrent laser excitation of the motors and the fluorophores was performed and data recorded with an integration time of 200 ms. The general relationship between the defocused pattern and the in-plane orientation is indicated at the top of Figure 3a; the dipole bisects the crescent pattern and points toward the gap between the two bright lobes. An extract of sequential emission patterns recorded for a single dynamic and long-lived emitter and the corresponding orientations derived from the in-plane angle (Φ) is presented

Figure 3. (a) Experimental defocused patterns of surface-bound motors were fitted to a library of calculated patterns to derive the in-plane and out-of-plane angles describing the orientation of the dipoles and thus the relative nanomechanical state in each frame. The data were recorded with an integration time of 200 ms at $27 \pm 3^\circ$. The dipoles exhibited successive photoisomerizations of the rotor (purple arrows $\Delta\Phi \sim 120^\circ$) and smaller changes $\Delta\Phi \sim 1\text{--}60^\circ$ (red arrowheads). (b) Suggested interpretation of the optomechanical response for surface-bound motors. The net unidirectional rotation of the rotor relative to the stator was masked due to work done by the motors causing the entire molecule (motor and tetrapodal base indicated by the gray crossed square) to rotate relative to the surface during the helicity inversion steps (red arrows) in the opposite sense to the rotor.

frame-by-frame. Videos of the raw data are provided in the [Supporting Information](#) (supporting video 1). Defocused imaging of individual emitters showed that when motor 1 was bound to a surface via exchangeable electrostatic interactions, net unidirectional rotation of motor 1 was obscured.

Under UV excitation, the dipoles were observed to undergo reorientations with both in-plane (Φ) and out-of-plane (θ) angular components. Large changes $\Delta\Phi \sim 120^\circ$ in both directions were observed, consistent with reversible photoisomerization between P and M or P' and M' states. Smaller fluctuations $\pm 1\text{--}10^\circ$ were also observed, presumably due to thermal noise. Crucially, the sequence of events in [Figure 3a](#) exemplified by frames 144–163 shows two successive photoisomerizations (fast $\Delta\Phi \sim 120^\circ$) that occurred in the same sense (clockwise) separated by slow change due to thermal motion. This sequence of events revealed the occurrence of a complete optomechanical cycle of rotation of the rotor relative to the stator. However, the change in Φ during the thermal (slow) transition between these photoisomerizations was counterclockwise. Inspection of the recordings of several motors ([supporting videos 1–6](#)) showed the behavior was common. We propose that the whole molecule may be rotating relative to the surface as in [Figure 3b](#) due to transient dissociation and reassociation of the feet with the surface during the ratcheted THI step.

The distribution of orientations exhibited by this dipole are shown in [Figure 4a](#). The concentration of points at $\Phi \sim 130^\circ$, $\theta \sim 45^\circ$ corresponds to frames recorded prior to initiating UV irradiation. Under UV irradiation, both Φ and θ angles were observed to change and the full range of Φ angles were exhibited indicating complete rotations of the motor. The white lines connecting successive points show frequent jumps of $\Delta\Phi \sim 120^\circ$ corresponding to photoisomerizations. Meanwhile, θ was usually between 20 and 50° with respect to vertical ($\theta = 0^\circ$). The changes in θ were consistent with the reorientation of the dipole during passage of the naphthalene moiety of the rotor across the stator. The distribution of Φ angles for this motor suggests three symmetrically arranged orientations, consistent with combination of net clockwise reorientations due to photoisomerization and retrograde motion of the entire molecule during the THI steps. Across the population of motors, the relative occupation of the M, M', P and P' states in terms of Φ angle was occluded by the random orientations of the motors on the surface combined with the retrograde in-plane motion and the different number of measurements made for individual motors. However, the θ angles associated with each state are unchanged by the relative in-plane orientations of the motor molecules. Hence, direct measurement of θ angles from a population of surface-bound molecular motors ($N > 15\,000$, $n = 77$) revealed the relative occupation of M+M' and P+P' states ([Figure 4b](#)). The data show substantial population of the M+M' states ($\theta = 31.0 \pm 5.4^\circ$), consistent with the system being driven away from equilibrium by laser irradiation.³⁰ This population of states contrasts with that at equilibrium where M+M' states would be expected to be negligible ([Figure S6](#)).

In conclusion, we have demonstrated the utility of wide-field defocused imaging to gain insight into the dynamic behavior of synthetic molecular rotary motors at interfaces. Application of the technique to a well-studied class of motor enabled us to showcase the capacity of defocused wide-field imaging to deliver mechanistic insight at the single-molecule level and even

Figure 4. (a) Distribution of all the orientations exhibited by a typical motor. The circumferential axis denotes the in-plane angular component (Φ) whereas the radial axis denotes the out-of-plane angular component (θ) of each derived dipole orientation. White lines indicate the change in orientation between successive frames. (b) Occupation of the θ angles derived across a population of measured dipole orientations ($N > 15\,000$, $n = 77$). The data were fitted to normal distributions ($R^2 = 0.93$) with centers at $31.0 \pm 5.4^\circ$ (M+M') and $42.0 \pm 2.3^\circ$ (P+P') consistent with the expected attachment of the motors to the surface.

the dynamics of an individual carbon–carbon bond that would be opaque to ensemble-level methods. We have shown that the unidirectional rotary behavior of the motor was modulated upon electrostatic attachment to a surface. Our measurements suggest that work was performed by the motors as they returned to equilibrium during the ratcheted thermal helicity inversion step to rotate the entire molecule relative to the surface. We expect that the present work will help to inform the design of more advanced surface-anchored systems based on UV-driven molecular motors. Particularly, if unidirectional rotation is to be harnessed, the molecule must be fixed to the surface in such a way that it cannot counter-rotate; perhaps by multiple covalent linkages. Furthermore, we anticipate that wide-field defocused imaging will come to further prominence

in investigations of the efficiency, limitations and thus the potential utility of synthetic molecular motors at interfaces.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

■ Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/jacs.7b02758.

Characterization of motor 1, experimental data (PDF)

Video of the raw data (AVI)

Video of the raw data (AVI)

Video of the raw data (AVI)

Video of the raw data (AVI)

Video of the raw data (AVI)

Video of the raw data (AVI)

■ AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Authors

*johan.hofkens@kuleuven.be

*b.l.feringa@rug.nl

ORCID

Bartosz Krajnik: 0000-0001-6082-0439

Jiawen Chen: 0000-0002-0251-8976

Matthew A. Watson: 0000-0003-2166-6840

Scott L. Cockroft: 0000-0001-9321-8997

Ben L. Feringa: 0000-0003-0588-8435

Johan Hofkens: 0000-0002-9101-0567

Author Contributions

[†]these authors contributed equally.

Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

B.K. thanks the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education's Mobility Plus programme (1068/MOB/2013/0). M.A.W. and S.L.C. thank the ERC (Starting Grant No. 336935) for financial support. B.L.F. thanks the ERC (Advanced Grant No. 694345) and the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Gravity program 024.001.035) for financial support. J.H. acknowledges financial support from the Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO, grants G0H6316N and G0A5817N), the Flemish government through long term structural funding Methusalem (CASAS2, Meth/15/04) and the Hercules foundation (HER/11/14).

■ REFERENCES

- (1) (a) Stoddart, J. F. *Acc. Chem. Res.* **2000**, *100*, 409–522. (b) Jimenez, M. C.; Dietrich-Buchecker, C.; Sauvage, J. P. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed.* **2000**, *39*, 3284–3287. (c) Balzani, V.; Venturi, M.; Credi, A. *Molecular Devices and Machines - A Journey into the Nanoworld*; Wiley-VCH: Weinheim, 2003. (d) Kinbara, K.; Aida, T. *Chem. Rev.* **2005**, *105*, 1377–1400. (e) Kottas, G. S.; Clarke, L. I.; Horinek, D.; Michl, J. *Chem. Rev.* **2005**, *105*, 1281–1376. (f) Browne, W. R.; Feringa, B. L. *Nat. Nanotechnol.* **2006**, *1*, 25–35. (g) Erbas-Cakmak, S.; Leigh, D. A.; McTernan, C. T.; Nussbaumer, A. L. *Chem. Rev.* **2015**, *115*, 10081–10206.
- (2) Koumura, N.; Zijlstra, R. W. J.; van Delden, R. A.; Harada, N.; Feringa, B. L. *Nature* **1999**, *401*, 152–155.
- (3) Leigh, D. A.; Wong, J. K. Y.; Dehez, F.; Zerbetto, F. *Nature* **2003**, *424*, 174–179.
- (4) Berna, J.; Leigh, D. A.; Lubomska, M.; Mendoza, S. M.; Perez, E. M.; Rudolf, P.; Teobaldi, G.; Zerbetto, F. *Nat. Mater.* **2005**, *4*, 704–710.

- (5) Watson, M. A.; Cockroft, S. L. *Chem. Soc. Rev.* **2016**, *45*, 6118–6129.
- (6) Uttamapinant, C.; Howe, J. D.; Lang, K.; Beránek, V.; Davis, L.; Mahesh, M.; Barry, N. P.; Chin, J. W. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2015**, *137*, 4602–4605.
- (7) Saurabh, S.; Perez, A. M.; Commerci, C. J.; Shapiro, L.; Moerner, W. E. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2016**, *138*, 10398–10401.
- (8) Huang, B.; Jones, S. A.; Brandenburg, B.; Zhuang, X. *Nat. Methods* **2008**, *5*, 1047–1052.
- (9) Yildiz, A.; Forkey, J. N.; McKinney, S. A.; Ha, T.; Goldman, Y. E.; Selvin, P. R. *Science* **2003**, *300*, 2061–2065.
- (10) Reck-Peterson, S. L.; Derr, N. D.; Stuurman, N. *Cold Spring Harb. Protoc.* **2010**, *2010* (3), pdb.prot5399.
- (11) Adachi, K.; Yasuda, R.; Noji, H.; Itoh, H.; Harada, Y.; Yoshida, M.; Kinosita, K. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A.* **2000**, *97*, 7243–7247.
- (12) de Oteyza, D. G.; Gorman, P.; Chen, Y.-C.; Wickenburg, S.; Riss, A.; Mowbray, D. J.; Etkin, G.; Pedramrazi, Z.; Tsai, H.-Z.; Rubio, A.; Crommie, M. F.; Fischer, F. R. *Science* **2013**, *340*, 1434–1437.
- (13) Stipe, B. C.; Rezaei, M. A.; Ho, W. *Science* **1998**, *279*, 1907–1909.
- (14) Uji-i, H.; Deres, A.; Muls, B.; Melnikov, S.; Enderlein, J.; Hofkens, J. *Fluorescence of Supramolecules, Polymers, and Nanosystems*, Berberan-Santos, M. N., Ed.; Springer Berlin Heidelberg: Berlin, Heidelberg, 2008; pp 257–284.
- (15) Böhmer, M.; Enderlein, J. *J. Opt. Soc. Am. B* **2003**, *20*, 554–559.
- (16) Lieb, M. A.; Zavislan, J. M.; Novotny, L. *J. Opt. Soc. Am. B* **2004**, *21*, 1210–1215.
- (17) Uji-i, H.; Melnikov, S. M.; Deres, A.; Bergamini, G.; De Schryver, F.; Herrmann, A.; Müllen, K.; Enderlein, J.; Hofkens, J. *Polymer* **2006**, *47*, 2511–2518.
- (18) Schroevers, W.; Vallée, R.; Patra, D.; Hofkens, J.; Habuchi, S.; Vosch, T.; Cotlet, M.; Müllen, K.; Enderlein, J.; De Schryver, F. C. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2004**, *126*, 14310–14311.
- (19) Melnikov, S. M.; Yeow, E. K. L.; Uji-i, H.; Cotlet, M.; Müllen, K.; De Schryver, F. C.; Enderlein, J.; Hofkens, J. *J. Phys. Chem. B* **2007**, *111*, 708–719.
- (20) Osborne, M. A. *J. Phys. Chem. B* **2005**, *109*, 18153–18161.
- (21) Armendariz, K. P.; Huckabay, H. A.; Livanec, P. W.; Dunn, R. C. *Analyst* **2012**, *137*, 1402–1408.
- (22) Hutchison, J. A.; Uji-i, H.; Deres, A.; Vosch, T.; Rocha, S.; Muller, S.; Bastian, A. A.; Enderlein, J.; Nourouzi, H.; Li, C.; Herrmann, A.; Mullen, K.; De Schryver, F.; Hofkens, J. *Nat. Nanotechnol.* **2014**, *9*, 131–136.
- (23) Kudernac, T.; Ruangsapichat, N.; Parschau, M.; Macia, B.; Katsonis, N.; Harutyunyan, S. R.; Ernst, K.-H.; Feringa, B. L. *Nature* **2011**, *479*, 208–211.
- (24) Eelkema, R.; Pollard, M. M.; Vicario, J.; Katsonis, N.; Ramon, B. S.; Bastiaansen, C. W. M.; Broer, D. J.; Feringa, B. L. *Nature* **2006**, *440*, 163–163.
- (25) Li, Q.; Fuks, G.; Moulin, E.; Maaloum, M.; Rawiso, M.; Kulic, I.; Foy, J. T.; Giuseppone, N. *Nat. Nanotechnol.* **2015**, *10*, 161–165.
- (26) Klok, M.; Boyle, N.; Pryce, M. T.; Meetsma, A.; Browne, W. R.; Feringa, B. L. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2008**, *130*, 10484–10485.
- (27) Kazaryan, A.; Kistemaker, J. C. M.; Schäfer, L. V.; Browne, W. R.; Feringa, B. L.; Filatov, M. J. *Phys. Chem. A* **2010**, *114*, 5058–5067.
- (28) Conyard, J.; Cnossen, A.; Browne, W. R.; Feringa, B. L.; Meech, S. R. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2014**, *136*, 9692–9700.
- (29) For the analytical data of 1, see Supporting Information. Detailed design, synthesis and isomerization studies will be reported separately.
- (30) Outliers at much larger θ angles may indicate transient detachment from the surface during energetic transitions or motors that were poorly attached due to local variations in the polymer layer.