ORGANOMETALLICS

Cycloaddition and C–H Activation Reactions of a Tantalum Alkylidyne

Rodrigo Ramírez-Contreras, Nattamai Bhuvanesh, and Oleg V. Ozerov*

Department of Chemistry, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77842, United States

Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: The alkylidyne complex $(C_5Me_5)Ta(≡CPh)$ -(PMe₃)₂Cl (1) was first reported by Schrock in 1978, but little if any follow-up work on 1 or other group 5 metal alkylidynes has been reported. This work discloses two avenues of reactivity of 1. Treatment of 1 with 3-hexyne resulted in the formation of a tantalacyclobutadiene. Abstraction of chloride from 1 led to a mixture of products that included isomers of $[(C_5Me_5)Ta(=CHPh)(CH_2PMe_2)(PMe_3)]^+$ (4), in which a C−H bond of a PMe₃ ligand was added across the Ta≡C bond. The C−H activation was found to be reversible, and the equilibrium mixture functioned as an equivalent of a cationic Ta alkylidyne in reaction with 3-hexyne, producing a cationic tantalacyclobutadiene (6). Compounds 4 and 6 were



structurally characterized in the solid state by XRD methods, with 6 being the first structurally characterized metallacyclobutadiene in group 5.

ompounds with transition metal-carbon triple bonds (i.e., $M \equiv CR$),¹ typically termed carbyne or alkylidyne complexes,^{2,3} are of particular importance as intermediates and catalysts in the metathesis of carbon-carbon triple bonds.^{4,5} They are most common in the chemistry of Mo and W (group (6),⁶ which function as capable alkyne and nitrile metathesis catalysts.^{7,8} Metal-carbon triple bonds are also well established for Re (group 7),^{9,10} with some examples of alkyne meta-thesis,¹¹ as well as Ru^{12} and Os^{13} (group 8), while Rh^{14} and Ir (group 9)¹⁵ offer only a few examples. Isolated compounds of metal-carbon triple bonds are unknown for metals of groups 3 and 4 and are rare for group 5. For purely hydrocarbyl CR ligands (alkylidynes) only one family of NacNac-based compounds is known for V_{1}^{16} none for Nb, and only the 1978 report¹⁷ from the Schrock group describing Cp'Ta- $(PMe_3)_3$ Cl(\equiv CPh) (where Cp' = η^5 -C₅H₅ or η^5 -C₅Me₅) for Ta. The Lippard group reported a series of V, Nb, and Ta siloxycarbyne complexes containing M≡COSiX₃ moieties that resulted from silvlation of metal carbonylate anions.¹⁸ Li and co-workers described Nb¹⁹ and Ta²⁰ phosphoniomethylidynes with a $M \equiv CPPh_3$ substructure. Several bridging alkylidyne complexes are known in group 5, including homobimetallic dimetallacyclobutadienes^{21,22} and alkylidynes bridging between Ta and Li,²³ as well as Ta and Zn.²⁴

We were interested by the scarcity of group 5 terminal alkylidynes reported in the literature and by the fact that they have not been studied experimentally²⁵ in the context of alkyne metathesis, even though $Cp'Ta(PMe_3)_2Cl(\equiv CPh)$ could potentially be a viable candidate for this type of reactivity. To the best of our knowledge, the only observation (*in situ*) of a [2+2] cycloaddition to yield a tantalacyclobutadiene comes

from the 1985 report by Pasman et al.,²⁶ describing the conversion of a trimetallic Ta₂Zn bridging alkylidyne to cyclopentadienyls in reactions with alkynes. We set out to revisit Schrock's $(C_5Me_5)Ta(PMe_3)_2Cl(\equiv CPh)$ (1).¹⁷ Our synthesis of 1 largely followed the original procedure (Scheme 1).¹⁷ Treatment of 1 with 3-hexyne resulted in the formation of tantalacyclobutadiene complex 2. The net reaction to form 2 entails replacement of 2 equiv of PMe₃ by 1 equiv of 3-hexyne. Around 95% conversion to 2 required repeated removal of volatiles (including free PMe₃) and readdition of 3-hexyne. Compound 2 was identified on the basis of the relevant NMR data in solution, especially the signature metallacyclobutadiene

Scheme 1. Treatment of 1 with 3-Hexyne Yields the Neutral Metallacyclobutadiene 2 as the Only Reaction Product



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Scheme 2. Reversible C-H Bond Activation at PMe₃ in Response to Chloride Abstraction from 1^a



WCA = $[HCB_{11}CI_{11}]^{-}$, $[B(3,5-C_6H_3(CF_3)_2)_4]^{-}$

^{*a*}PMe₃ ligand distribution to form compound **3** is concomitant with formation of a small amount of an unidentified compound **5**. Treatment of the mixture with 3-hexyne afforded the metallacyclobutadiene **6** as the only product.

¹³C NMR resonances at 154.7, 207.2, and 212.9 ppm. We observed no NMR-detectable amounts of the potential metathesis product (1-phenylbutyne) in the formation of **2**.

In light of this result and based on our previous experience with highly reactive cations,²⁷ we speculated that abstraction of chloride from it may lead to a more reactive complex. Abstraction of chloride was performed using excess Na[BARF] $(BARF = [B(3,5-C_6H_3(CF_3)_2)_4]^-)$, which was dried following the Bergman procedure.²⁸ In some reactions, especially for the purposes of isolation of pure solids, we used equimolar amounts of Na[HCB₁₁Cl₁₁] or Na[n-BuCB₁₁Cl₁₁],²⁹ which can be safely dried by heating *in vacuo*. A 3:2 mixture of toluene- d_8 and protio-1,2-difluorobenzene (ODFB) was our solvent of choice for in situ NMR studies. This mixture provides a reasonable compromise in terms of cost, the solubility of organometallic BARF or carborane salts, and the ability to collect quality ¹H NMR spectra (with the exception of the aromatic region). Treatment of 1 with 2.5 equiv of Na[BARF] resulted in a mixture of four apparent products (Scheme 2). The same mixture of organometallic cations was observed when 1.0 equiv of Na[BARF], Na[HCB₁₁Cl₁₁], or Na[n-BuCB₁₁Cl₁₁] was used, along with the free anion resonances. We were able to identify the nature of three components of the mixture. One is the tris-phosphine complex 3. It was isolated in 84% yield as a BARF salt in an analytically pure solid form from a reaction with three additional equivalents of PMe₃ (Scheme 2). NMR data supported the assignment, with a 2:1 doublet:triplet pattern in the ${}^{31}P{}^{1}H{}$ NMR spectrum and a ${}^{13}C{}^{1}H{}$ resonance at 365.6 ppm for the alkylidyne carbon (dt, ${}^{2}J_{C-P}$ = 29.9 Hz, ${}^{2}J_{C-P}$ = 9.2 Hz).

Two other components of the mixture appear to be isomers of the cyclometalated complex 4. Each of the isomers displayed a pair of doublets in the ${}^{31}P{}^{1}H$ NMR spectrum, and the ${}^{1}H$ NMR spectra of the mixture contained resonances assignable to two sets of cyclometalated Me₂PCH₂ fragments, in addition to the corresponding unactivated PMe₃ and C₅Me₅ signals. The isomers 4a/4b are products of the net addition of a C-H bond in PMe₃ across the Ta \equiv C bond, in the unobserved intermediate $[(C_{s}Me_{s})Ta(CPh)(PMe_{3})_{2}]^{+}$. Compounds 4a/ 4b and 3 are clearly related by equilibrium with PMe₃. Addition of extra PMe₃ to the mixture increased the content of 3 after sitting overnight at 40 °C. Additionaly, treatment of 3 with $B(C_6F_5)_3$ to trap PMe₃ as Me₃P-B(C_6F_5)_3³⁰ led to the clean conversion to the mixture of 4a/4b only. This demonstrates the facile reversibility of C-H activation by Ta≡C under the reaction conditions.

We were not able to identify the fourth, minor component (<2%) of the mixture corresponding to the singlet in the ${}^{31}P{}^{1}H{}$ NMR spectrum. Its content in the mixture was not affected by addition or removal of PMe₃, suggesting that compound 5 is not related to 3 and 4 simply by PMe₃ loss. We considered whether it might be a product of adventitious hydrolysis, but carefully measured addition of small quantities of water to a mixture of 3, 4, and 5 did not result in the increase of the content of 5.

The mass balance for the chloride abstraction reaction is not fully clear. Naturally, the P:Ta ratio of 3 for compound 2 and of 2 for compound 3 necessitates the formation of another coproduct with a lower P:Ta ratio. It is possible that the unknown 5 contains only one P per Ta or that formation of a small quantity of P-free Ta complex(es) takes place. Chloride abstraction in the presence of mesitylene as an internal integration standard showed retention of C_5Me_5 and PMe_3 ¹H resonance intensity in solution within the likely 10% error of measurement, but this margin of error may be enough to provide for the extra PMe₃ release needed to form 5.

Our efforts to isolate 4a/4b separately or as a pure isomeric mixture on a preparative scale have not been successful. However, we obtained an X-ray quality single crystal from the reaction of 1 with Na[*n*-BuCB₁₁Cl₁₁], and an XRD study confirmed the proposed connectivity (Figure 1). The CH₂-P bond of the cyclometalated phosphine is in the same plane as the Ta-P bond to the unaffected PMe₃, with the CH₂ group



Figure 1. ORTEP diagram of one of the isomers of 4. Thermal ellipsoids are set to 50% probability. Hydrogen atoms and [n-BuCB₁₁Cl₁₁]⁻ anion are omitted for clarity. Selected distances (Å) and angles (deg): Ta(1)-C(1) 1.918(2), Ta(1)-C(8) 2.262(2), Ta(1)-(P1) 2.5729(6), Ta(1)-(P2) 2.5680(6), P(1)-C(8) 1.762(2), P(1)-C(9) 1.808(2), P(1)-C(10) 1.817(2); Ta(1)-C(1)-C(2) 164.24(18), P(2)-Ta(1)-P(1) 82.065(19).

tilted toward the C5Me5 ring. The two Ta-P distances are nearly the same, and the Ta–CH₂ bond length of 2.262(2) Å is normal for a single Ta-C single bond. The overall geometry of the $Ta-P(Me)_2-CH_2$ fragment is very similar to that in $(Me_3P)_4W(CH_2PMe_2)(H)$, except that M-P and M-C distances are shorter for M = W.³¹ The Ta=C bond in the alkylidene fragment of 1.918(2) Å is at the shorter end of the Ta=C bond length range, but is longer than the 1.849(8) Å Ta \equiv C bond in 1. The Ta=C-C angle of ca. 164° is quite typical for agostic Ta alkylidenes.¹⁷ The alkylidene formulation of 4a/4b is further supported by the observation of two downfield resonances (δ 234.6 and 244.7 ppm) in the ¹³C NMR spectrum of the reaction mixture showing low ${}^{1}J_{C-H}$ values of 76-77 Hz. The closest Ta structural analogue of 4 is $(C_5Me_5)Ta(C_2H_4)(PMe_3)(=CHCMe_3)$,³² where the Ta- (C_2H_4) metallacyclopropane is positioned similarly to Ta- (CH_2PMe_2) in 4. The two isomers of 4 likely reflect a switch of the CH₂ and PMe₂ positions in 4. While we cannot rule out other possibilities, this explanation is consistent with markedly different ${}^{2}J_{P-P}$ values in 4a/4b (14 and 54 Hz), as would be expected for different P-Ta-P angles. Addition of C-H bonds across metal-element multiple bonds has rich precedent.³³ The most closely related example is the chemistry of C-H activation by an unobserved Ti alkylidyne extensively studied by the Mindiola group.³⁴

 $(C_5H_5)Ta(PMe_3)_2(Cl)(\equiv CPh)$ underwent a transformation to an apparently analogous mixture upon treatment with Na[BARF], based on NMR spectroscopic data. We have not pursued full characterization or isolation of Cp complexes. The details of the *in situ* observations are given in the SI.

We then set out to examine reactions of the mixture of compounds 2 and 4a/4b with alkynes (Scheme 2). Treatment of this mixture with 3-hexyne resulted in a clean reaction, forming 6 in >95% purity (NMR evidence) *in situ* and in 68% isolated yield. In contrast, addition of diphenylacetylene gave no evidence of metallacycle formation. Treatment of the mixture of 2 and 4a/4b with a mixture of 3-hexyne and diphenylacetylene gave only 6. We saw no evidence of formation of the cross-metathesis product (1-phenyl-1-butyne).

The molecular structure of 5 in the solid state was established by an X-ray diffraction study (Figure 2).



Figure 2. ORTEP diagram (50% probability ellipsoids) of 6. Selected atom labeling is shown. Thermal ellipsoids are set to 50% probability. Hydrogen atoms and the $[HCB_{11}Cl_{11}]^-$ anion are omitted for clarity. Selected distances (Å) and angles (deg): Ta(1)-C(11) 1.956(4), Ta(1)-C(21) 1.948(4), Ta(1)-C(18) 2.179(3), C(11)-C(18) 1.461(5), C(18)-C(21) 1.481(5), Ta(1)-P(1) 2.5602(10), C(21)-Ta(1)-C(11) 82.51(15), C(21)-C(18)-C(11) 122.1(3).

Compound 6 exhibits a geometry that is distorted away from the ideal three-legged piano stool configuration, due to the geometric restrictions imposed by the tantalacyclobutadiene. The Ta-C(21) (1.948(4) Å) and Ta-C(11) (1.956(4) Å) distances are not significantly different and are within the range of Ta-C double bonds.¹ The two C-C distances within the TaC₃ ring are quite similar, as well, and fall between the typical range of C–C double bonds $(1.33 \text{ Å in ethylene})^{35}$ and single bonds (1.54 Å in ethane).³⁶ While there are no other structurally characterized tantalacyclobutadienes for comparison, the metrics in the C₃Et₂Ph ligand in 5 and the nearsymmetric binding to the metal are similar to those reported for the tungstacyclobutadiene W(C^tBuCMeCMe)Cl₃ (7).³⁷ Structurally characterized tungstacyclobutadienes vary in how symmetric the C₃ fragment is.³⁸ Distances $M-C_{\alpha}$ Ta(1)- $\dot{C}(11)$ and Ta(1) - C(21) in 6 (1.956(4), 1.948(4) Å) were in the same range as analogous distances in compound 7 (1.861(9), 1.864(8) Å). Similarly, $C_{\alpha}-C_{\beta}$ bond lengths C(11)-C(18) and C(18)-C(21) (1.461(5), 1.481(5) Å) in 6 are comparable to related bonds in 7 (1.455(13), 1.478(12))Å).³⁷ Finally, compound 6 displays an obtuse $C_{\alpha}-C_{\beta}-C_{\alpha'}$ angle of $122.1(3)^\circ$, which is comparable to the analogous angle in 7 $(118.9(8)^{\circ})$. The three metallacyclic carbons in 5 were observed at 170.7, 236.2, and 240.8 ppm in the ¹³C NMR spectrum. The pattern of two more downfield (>200 ppm) C_{α} resonances and one more upfield C_{β} is common for trisubstituted metallacyclobutadienes of W, ^{37,38} Mo, ³⁹ and Re.⁴⁰

In summary, we have examined the reactivity of a Ta alkylidyne moiety, which has been hardly explored previously. A cationic Ta alkylidyne has been characterized, along with products of C-H addition across the Ta \equiv C bond. Cyclo-addition with 3-hexyne produced a tantalacyclobutadiene that was ostensibly stable to cycloreversion.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

Experimental details; crystallographic data in the form of a CIF file. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Author

*E-mail: ozerov@chem.tamu.edu.

Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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