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Self-Assembly in Inorganic Chemistry

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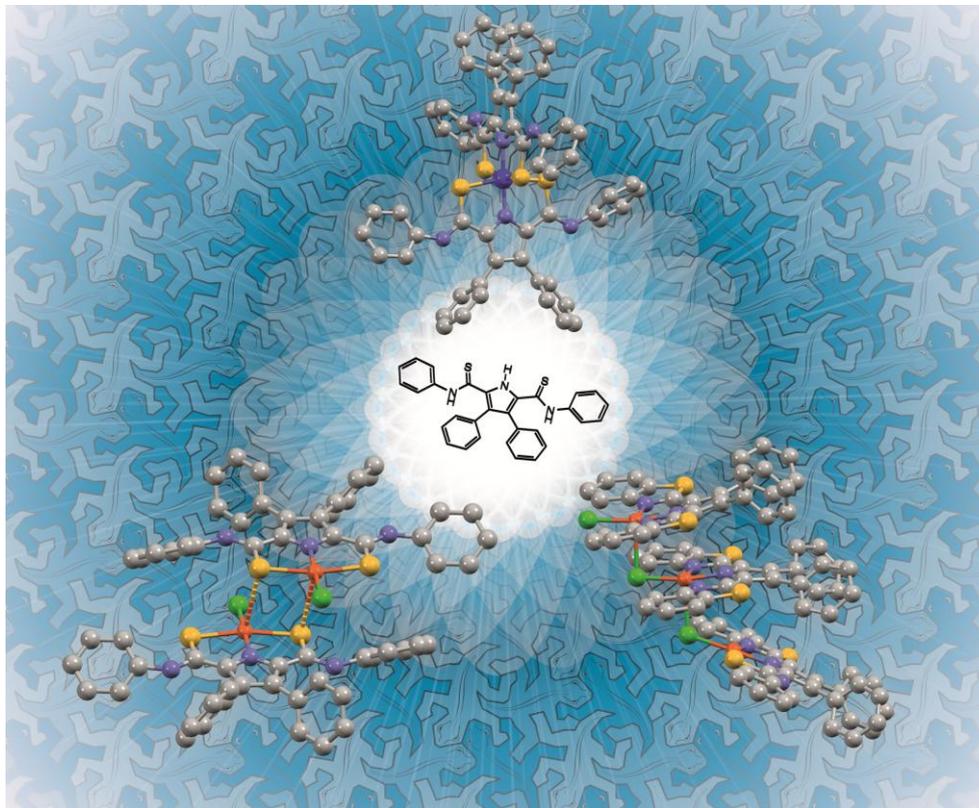


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Decorating the lanthanide terminus of self-assembled heterodinuclear lanthanum(III)/gallium(III) helicates†

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Arylacylhydrazones of 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde are appropriate ligands for the preparation of heterodinuclear triple-stranded helicates involving high coordinated lanthanide(III) ions. In the present study, three different kinds of substituents are introduced at the ligands in order to modify the organic periphery of the coordination compounds: (1) alkoxy groups are attached to the terminal phenyl groups, (2) NH protons of the hydrazones are substituted by phenyl moieties and (3) amino acid bearing units are attached to the terminus of the ligand. The new ligands nicely form the desired triple-stranded gallium(III)-lanthanum(III) complexes [(5a-c,7,12,15)₃GaLa] of which the highly phenylated derivative was crystallized and studied by X-ray diffraction.

Introduction

Metallosupramolecular chemistry is based on the reversible recognition between metal ions and oligotopic ligands.¹ Complicated structures are obtained by simply mixing of organic ligands with appropriate metal ions.² If heterotopic ligands are introduced, it is possible to isolate coordination compounds containing different metal ions in well defined positions. Especially the latter are of high importance in order to study metal-metal communication phenomena.³

A very simple class of metallosupramolecular compounds are the helicates.⁴ They are formed in self-assembly processes starting from linear oligotopic ligand strands and two or more metal ions. The introduction of different metal ions to obtain heterodinuclear complexes is challenging but was described in some cases and utilizes either different electronic features or different denticity of ligand units to distinguish between the different metal ions. The latter allows for example the formation of heterodinuclear p-f or d-f coordination compounds which in some cases exhibit interesting energy transfer between complex units.⁵

Recently we introduced a simple system, in which triple-stranded heterodinuclear complexes are formed from acyl- (**A**)⁶ or tosyl-hydrazones (**B**)⁷ of 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde. The catechol unit acts as a bidentate ligand and coordinates *e.g.* titanium(IV), aluminum(III) or gallium(III) ions, while the acyl or tosyl hydrazone together with the internal catechol oxygen atoms represents a tridentate ligand for binding of high coordinated metal ions (*e.g.* lanthanides). A remarkable difference between the acyl and the tosyl derivatives is that in **A** the ligands are more or less linear,

while in **B** a kink is introduced by the tetrahedral sulphur atom leading to back folding of the substituent and a more compressed overall shape (Fig. 1).

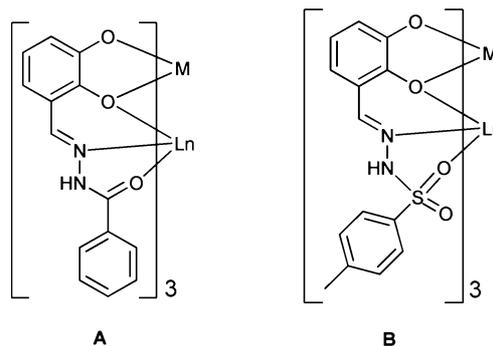


Fig. 1 Heterodinuclear helicates based on acyl- (**A**) or tosyl-hydrazones (**B**) of 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde.

The simple preparation of those ligands for self-assembly of heterodinuclear compounds allows a facile variation of the substituents in the periphery. In here we describe different approaches to functionalized helicates of type **A**. First, terminal aryl substituents are introduced, which bear alkyl chains of different length. This leads to compounds with a hydrophobic lanthanide moiety. Second, the NH proton of the acylhydrazone is substituted by a phenyl group, resulting in an accumulation of six phenyl substituents around the lanthanide complex. Finally, amino acid based residues are attached to the “lanthanide terminus” of the ligand in order to provide derivatives which in the future can be used for the attachment of *e.g.* short peptides.

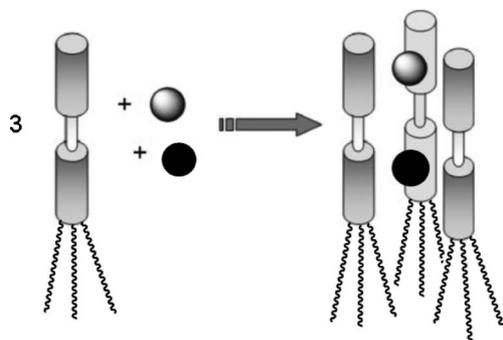
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† CCDC reference number 789894. For crystallographic data in CIF or other electronic format see DOI: 10.1039/c1dt10775e

Results and discussion

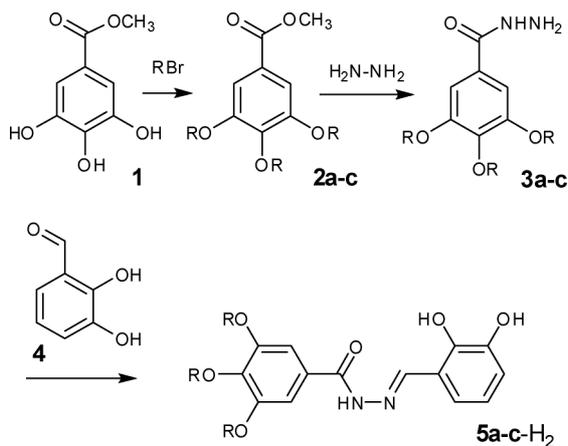
Alkyl-substituted heterodinuclear triple-stranded helicates

In general, alkyl-functionalization at the acylhydrazone terminus of the ligand results in coordination compounds in which all alkyl groups are orientated in the same direction of space. This is schematically presented in Scheme 1.



Scheme 1 Schematic representation of the formation of heterodinuclear helicates which bear an “alkyl-bundle” at the tail.

The preparation of the required ligands **5a-c-H** follows the reaction sequence as outlined in Scheme 2. It starts with methylgallate **1** which easily is prepared from commercially available gallic acid.⁸ The alkyl chains are introduced by a Williamson ether synthesis. It is found that in this step the length of the carbon chains influences the conditions required for the reaction.



R = *n*-propyl (a), *n*-butyl (b), benzyl (c)

Scheme 2 Preparation of ligands **5a-c-H₂**.

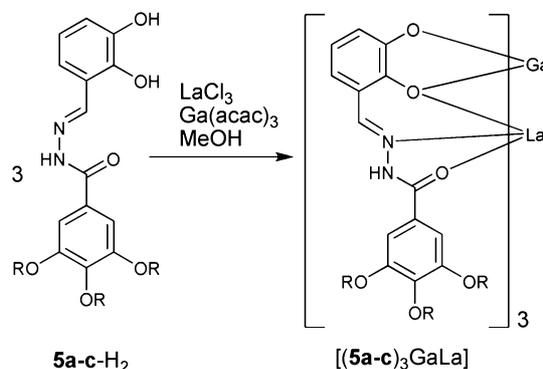
The introduction of the propyl chain, to obtain the intermediate **2a**, proceeds in 84% yield within 6 h. DMF is used as solvent instead of acetone, which was reported in the literature.⁹ With acetone too long reaction times are required leading to significant decomposition of the product. In contrast to this, it has been possible to easily introduce the butyl chain (**2b**) in acetone (80%). Both compounds **2a** and **2b** show good solubility in water indicating only weak hydrophobic influence of the alkyl chains.

As aromatic substituent a benzylic group was introduced following as well the Williamson ether synthesis. **2c** was obtained after 24 h by reflux in acetone (92%).

The second step of the sequence to afford the ligands was the preparation of the hydrazides by reaction of the esters with hydrazine monohydrate. Products **3a** and **3b** were obtained from **2a** and **2b** in 70% or quantitative, respectively, after 24 h at room temperature in MeOH. This probably was possible due to the good solubility of the intermediates **2a** and **2b** in polar solvents. Compound **3c** was obtained from **2c** and hydrazine after reflux in MeOH for 48 h in a yield of 51%.

Finally, standard hydrazone condensation of derivatives **3a–3c** with 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde **4** in methanol afforded after 24 h the ligands **5a-H₂** - **5c-H₂**.¹⁰

With the obtained ligands, complexes [(**5a**)₃GaLa], [(**5b**)₃GaLa] and [(**5c**)₃GaLa] were successfully synthesized and were characterized by NMR spectroscopy and MS-spectrometry. The coordination studies were performed following Scheme 3.



Scheme 3 Formation of the heterodinuclear La-Ga helicates [(**5a-c**)₃GaLa] from the corresponding ligands. [(**5c**)₃GaLa] with six terminal benzyl groups can be described as a generation 0 (G0) dendritic unit.¹¹

As a representative example the NMR spectra of complex [(**5b**)₃GaLa] as well as of the free ligand **5b-H₂** are depicted in Fig. 2. The protons of the catecholate OH disappear upon coordination. Especially the NH proton is strongly influenced and is shifted from $\delta = 11.12$ to 12.45. The other resonances experience a high field shift. E.g., the aromatic protons are shifted from $\delta = 6.75$ – 6.97 to $\delta = 6.32$ – 6.48 .

A hexaphenyl-substituted heterodinuclear triple-stranded helicate

In ligands of type **A**, substituents at the acyl unit can be easily varied in the preparation of the ligand. However, it was also of interest to substitute the NH proton in order to protect this position against deprotonation and to introduce additional branching. Therefore the known phenyl acyl hydrazone **6**¹² was condensed with aldehyde **4** to obtain ligand **7-H₂**. Coordination studies with gallium(III) as well as lanthanum(III) salts resulted in the formation of the heterodinuclear helicate [(**7**)₃GaLa] (Scheme 4).

The complex [(**7**)₃GaLa] was characterized by spectroscopic methods. The NMR spectrum shows the peak of the imine proton at $\delta = 7.84$ (s, 3H), the aromatic resonances of the phenyl groups at $\delta = 7.45$ (m, 15 H), 6.98 (t, $J = 7.4$ Hz, 3 H), 6.76 (d, $J = 7.4$ Hz, 6 H), 6.50 (d, $J = 7.4$ Hz, 6 H), and the catechol signals at $\delta = 6.38$ (t, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 3 H), 6.08 (m, 6 H). Positive ESI MS reveals the dominating molecular peak of the protonated species at $m/z = 1199.33$.

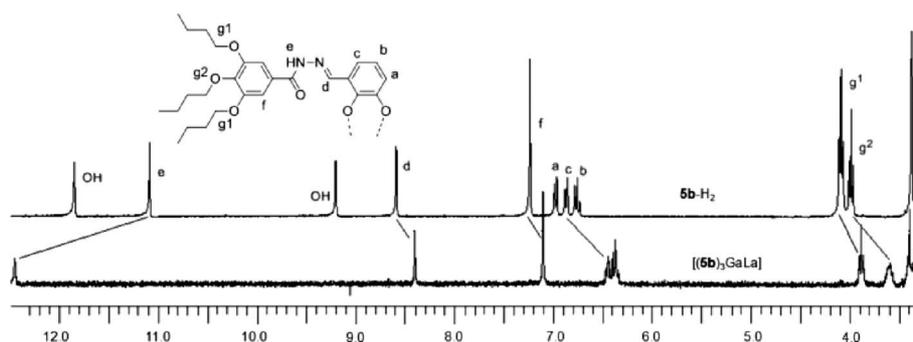
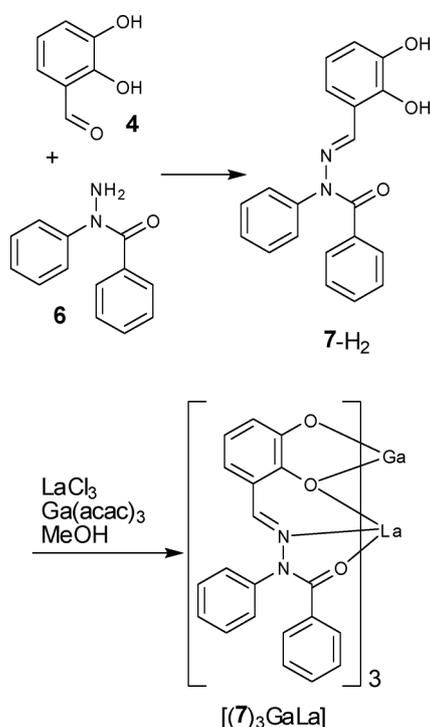


Fig. 2 Proton NMR spectra of $[(5b)_3GaLa]$ as well as of the free ligand $5b-H_2$ in $DMSO-d_6$.



Scheme 4 Preparation of the ligand $7-H_2$ and its heterodinuclear helicate $[(7)_3GaLa]$.

X-ray quality crystals of $[(7)_3GaLa]$ were obtained. In the crystal, one molecule of ether was observed as well as a dmf molecule, which coordinates to the lanthanum(III) ion. Fig. 3a shows the coordination environment at the gallium of $[(7)_3GaLa]$ which is bound by three catecholate units and at the lanthanum chelated by three acylhydrazones and additionally by the internal oxygen atoms of the catecholate units. Finally dmf is binding to the lanthanum(III) ion resulting in CN = 10 at this ion. Fig. 3b depicts a CPK model revealing the helical twist of the heterodinuclear complex. In addition, views down the La-Ga axis (c) as well as the Ga-La axis (d) are presented.

The structure of $[(7)_3GaLa]$ -dmf is well comparable to the ones earlier described for complexes like **A** in which an NH is present instead of the N-Ph moiety. The three “new” phenyl substituents are located at the lower side of the complex (“lanthanide terminus”) and are orientated towards the “outside”. Now six phenyl groups are closely packed at this terminus of the helicate.

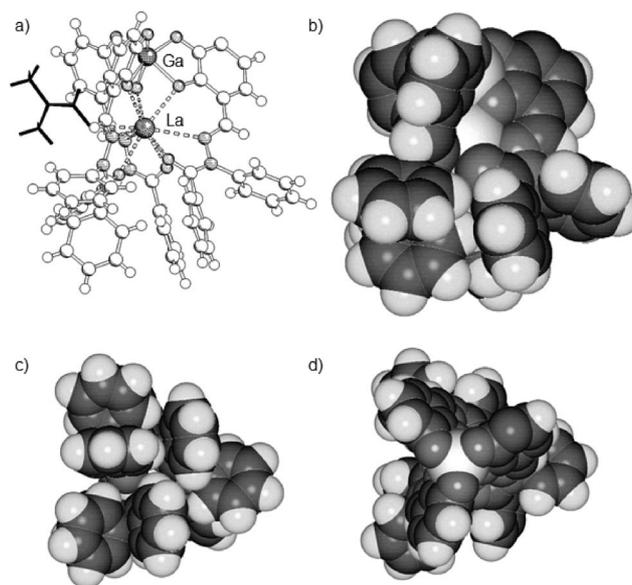


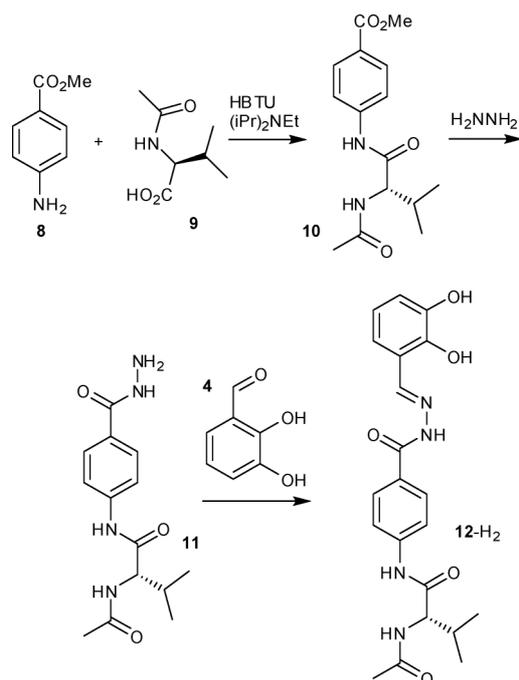
Fig. 3 Molecular structure of $[(7)_3GaLa]$ in the solid phase. Side view as ball and stick (a) as well as CPK model (b). Top view down the La-Ga (c) and the Ga-La axis (d). For clarity DMF is either only indicated (a) or omitted (b-d).

Amino acid functionalized ligands and complexes

The attachment of amino acid residues to the terminus of the heteroditopic ligands is of special interest. This might act as an anchor in order to attach peptidic chains. Metal coordination will preorganize three of the strands in order to generate interactions between amino acids (or peptides).¹³

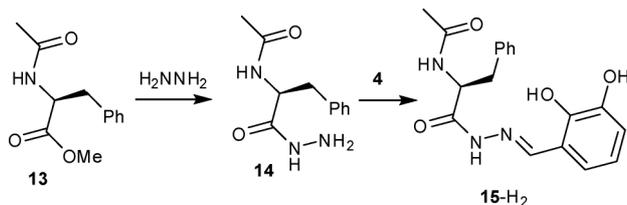
A first amino acid functionalized ligand was obtained starting from 4-amino benzoic acid methylester (**8**) and N-acyl valine (**9**). The benzoic ester **10** is formed in the presence of HBTU as amide coupling reagent. Reaction with hydrazine affords the acyl hydrazone **11**. Finally, ligand **12-H₂** is obtained after hydrazone condensation of **11** with 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde (**4**) (Scheme 5).

In ligand **12-H₂** the amino acid is separated from the coordination side for the metals by the phenyl linker. **15-H₂**, on the other hand, represents a related compound in which the amino acid phenyl alanine is involved in the tridentate lanthanide binding side. This derivative is made from N-acyl phenylalanine



Scheme 5 Preparation of the ligand **12-H₂**.

methyl ester **13** by reaction with hydrazine. The resulting acyl hydrazide **14** forms the hydrazone **15-H₂** by condensation with 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde **4** (Scheme 6).



Scheme 6 Preparation of the ligand **15-H₂**.

Complexes of ligands **12-H₂** and **15-H₂** are synthesized by the standard method using three equivalents of the ligand, lanthanum(III) chloride and gallium tris(acetylacetonate) in the presence of potassium carbonate. For solubility reasons the heterodinuclear complexes $[(12)_3GaLa]$ and $[(15)_3GaLa]$ cannot be separated from the byproduct potassium chloride. However, the complexes can be well characterized by proton NMR, resulting in slightly broadened spectra which reveal one set of signals of the ligands. Most characteristic are the ESI MS spectra (Fig. 4). In the positive detection mode, peaks of the triple stranded heterodinuclear coordination compounds are observed at $m/z = 1479$ for $[K(12)_3GaLa]^+$ and at $m/z = 1226$ for $[H(15)_3GaLa]^+$.

The amino acid building blocks in ligands **12-H₂** and **15-H₂** were introduced as the naturally occurring S-isomer. Thus the ligands are obtained in enantiomerically pure form. The two compounds **12-H₂** and **15-H₂** as well as $[(12)_3GaLa]$ do not show significant CD signals. However, in case of $[(15)_3GaLa]$ strong negative Cotton effects are observed at 260, 330 nm and a slight negative effect at 370 nm. A strong positive Cotton effect is detected around 300 nm. This is tentatively interpreted by the ability of the phenyl alanine residue in **15** to induce the helical twist at the dinuclear metal

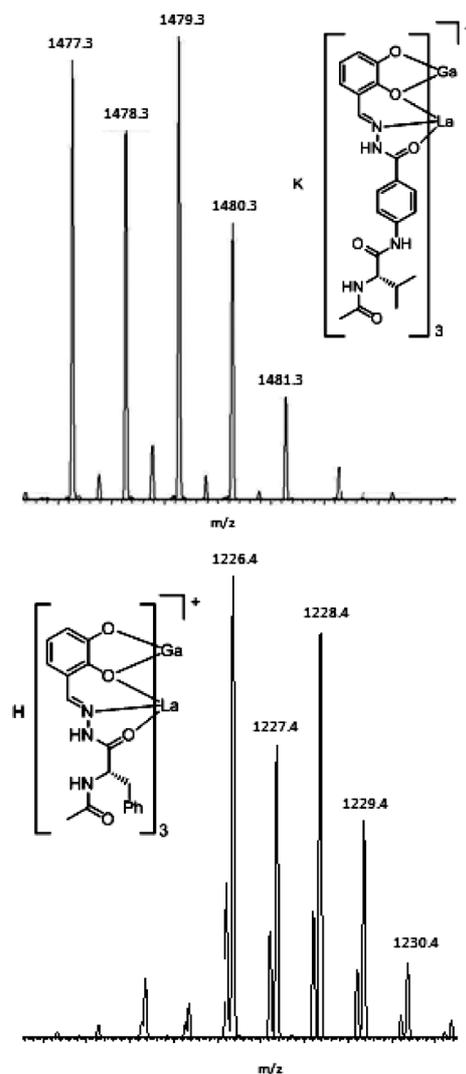


Fig. 4 Parts of the positive ESI MS spectra showing the molar peaks of $[K(12)_3GaLa]^+$ (top) and $[H(15)_3GaLa]^+$ (bottom).

complex. In $[(12)_3GaLa]$ the chiral units are too far away from the coordination sites and thus cannot influence the stereochemistry at the helicate unit.

Conclusions

In here the preparation of acylhydrazones of 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde was presented, which act as ligands for the self-assembly of heterodinuclear lanthanide(III)-gallium(III) helicates. The new ligands are substituted at the acylhydrazone unit which binds the lanthanide ion. Three different types of ligands are presented: (1) Ligands **5a-c** possess alkyl chains of different length or benzyl groups located at the terminal phenyl unit. (2) Ligand **7** bears a phenyl group instead of the proton at the acyl hydrazone unit. (3) In compounds **12** and **15**, amino acid residues are attached to the lanthanide terminus of the ligand. All ligands nicely form the heterodinuclear metal complexes by simply mixing the metals (gallium(III) and lanthanum(III)) and ligands in correct stoichiometry.

For [(7)₃GaLa] an X-ray structural analysis could be obtained revealing the binding situation at the metal centers of the heterodinuclear complex. In case of [(15)₃GaLa] the helical twist at the heterodinuclear complex is induced by the chiral phenyl alanine residue.¹⁴

It has been demonstrated that the heteroditopic acylhydrazone ligands of 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde easily can be functionalized at the “lanthanide terminus”. This will be the motivation for future studies in order to introduce more sophisticated substituents (*e.g.* peptides) and to arrange them in space by metal directed self-assembly of heterodinuclear complexes.

Experimental Section

NMR spectra were recorded on a Varian Mercury 300 or Inova 400 spectrometer. FT-IR spectra were recorded on a Bruker IFS spectrometer. Mass spectra were taken on a Thermo Deca XP mass spectrometer. Elemental analyses were obtained with a Heraeus CHN-O-Rapid analyser. Compounds **3b**, **3c**⁹ and **6**¹² were prepared following literature procedures.

The X-ray intensity data were collected in the ω scan mode on an Oxford Diffraction XcaliburTM2 diffractometer using graphite-monochromatized Mo-K α radiation. The data were processed with CrysAlisPro.¹⁵ They were corrected for Lorentz and polarization effects. Absorption corrections were carried out semi-empirically on the basis of multiple-scanned reflections.¹⁶ The crystal structures were solved by direct methods using SHELXS-97 and refined with SHELXL-97.¹⁷ Due to the weak scattering power and the resulting low number of observed reflections anisotropic displacement parameters were introduced for all metal and oxygen atoms only. Hydrogen atoms were placed at geometrically calculated positions and refined with the appropriate riding model.

Syntheses

Synthesis of 2a. A mixture of 3,4,5-trihydroxymethylbenzoate (1 g, 5.39 mmol), propylbromide (2.22 g, 18.0 mmol) and an excess of K₂CO₃ (4.2 g, 30 mmol) solved in DMF (50 mL) was heated to 80 °C for 6 h. After cooling, the reaction was poured onto ice, extracted three times with 50 mL Et₂O and dried over NaSO₄. After filtration of the solid, the solvent was eliminated under reduced pressure. The product was purified by column chromatography (n-hexan/10% ethylacetate). The product was obtained as yellow oil in 84% yield (1.4 g, 4.5 mmol). ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.21 (s, 2H), 3.93 (t, 2H, *J* = 6.4 Hz), 3.91 (t, 4H, *J* = 6.5 Hz), 3.83 (s, 3H), 1.85–1.68 (m, 6H), 0.98 (t, 6H, *J* = 7.4 Hz). - MS (EI, 70 eV): *m/z* (%) = 310.3 (100%) [M]⁺, 184.1 (65.4%) [C₈H₅O₅]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 2917, 2849, 1716, 1587, 1504, 1468, 1431, 1336, 1224, 1128, 962, 763, 720 cm⁻¹. - C₁₇H₂₆O₅ (310.17): C 65.78, H 8.44; found C 65.86, H 8.73

Synthesis of 3a. To a methanolic solution of **2a** (0.16 g, 0.52 mmol), 20 mL hydrazine monohydrate were added drop wise under stirring and at room temperature within 15 min. After 24 h stirring the precipitate was filtered off, washed with water and dried under high vacuum. A white solid was obtained in 70% yield (0.112 g, 0.36 mmol). Melting point: 97–99 °C. - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 9.65 (br. s, 1H), 7.12 (s, 2H), 4.43 (br. s, 2H), 3.95 (t, 4H, *J* = 6.43 Hz), 3.87 (t, 2H, *J* = 6.31 Hz),

1.74 (hex, 4H, *J* = 7.18), 1.64 (hex, 2H, *J* = 7.18 Hz), 1.03–0.94 (m, 9H). - MS (EI, 70 eV): *m/z* (%) = 310.3 (24.9%) [M]⁺, 279.2 (100%) [C₁₆H₂₃O₄]⁺, 237.2 (52.8%) [C₁₃H₁₇O₄]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3264, 2963, 2877, 1629, 1584, 1495, 1427, 1341, 1242, 1118, 954, 761, 720 cm⁻¹. - C₁₇H₂₆O₅ (310.17): C 61.91, H 8.44, N 9.03; found C 62.23, H 8.44, N 8.51.

Synthesis of 5a. To a flask charged with a solution of **3a** (0.25 g, 0.81 mmol) in MeOH (20 mL), 0.11 g (0.81 mmol) of **4** were added. The mixture was refluxed for 24 h. After cooling to 0 °C the precipitate was filtered off and washed with cold MeOH (10 mL). After drying under high vacuum the product was obtained as a grey solid in 52% yield (180 mg, 0.418 mmol). Melting point: 237 °C. - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 11.90 (s, 1H), 11.12 (s, 1H), 9.22 (s, 1H), 8.60 (s, 6H), 7.23 (s, 2H), 6.97 (dd, 1H, *J* = 7.54 Hz, *J* = 1.61 Hz), 6.86 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.18 Hz), 6.75 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.79 Hz), 4.01 (t, 4H, *J* = 6.31 Hz), 3.92 (t, 2H, *J* = 6.31 Hz), 1.78 (hex, 4H, *J* = 6.97 Hz), 1.67 (hex, 2H, *J* = 6.93 Hz), 1.02 (t, 9H, *J* = 7.67 Hz). - MS (EI, 70 eV): *m/z* (%) = 430.3 (73%) [M]⁺, 279.2 (100%) [C₁₆H₂₃O₄]⁺, 237.2 (56.4%) [C₁₃H₁₆O₄]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3177, 2965, 2934, 1633, 1576, 1472, 1332, 1278, 1220, 1114, 956, 731 cm⁻¹. - C₁₇H₂₆O₅ (430.2): C 64.17, H 7.02, N 6.51; found: C 64.06, H 6.81, N 6.46

Synthesis of 5b. To a flask charged with a solution of **3b** (0.272 g, 0.77 mmol) in MeOH (20 mL), 0.138 g (1.00 mmol) of **4** were added. The mixture was refluxed for 24 h. After cooling to 0 °C precipitation occurred. The solid was filtered off and washed with cold MeOH (10 mL). After drying under high vacuum the product was obtained as a white solid in 48% yield (170 mg, 0.370 mmol). Melting point: 228–229 °C. - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 11.90 (s, 1H), 11.12 (s, 1H), 9.22 (s, 1H), 8.60 (s, 6H), 7.23 (s, 2H), 6.97 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.67 Hz, *J* = 1.61 Hz), 6.86 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.66 Hz), 6.75 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.67 Hz), 4.05 (t, 4H, *J* = 6.31 Hz), 3.95 (t, 2H, *J* = 6.18 Hz), 1.75 (quin, 4H, *J* = 6.80 Hz), 1.67 (quin, 2H, *J* = 6.80 Hz), 1.54–1.40 (m, 6H), 0.97 (t, 6H, *J* = 7.42 Hz), 0.92 (t, 9H, *J* = 7.30 Hz). - MS (EI, 70 eV): *m/z* (%) = 472.4 (53.0%) [M]⁺, 321.3 (100%) [C₁₉H₂₉O₄]⁺, 265.2 (63.9%) [C₁₅H₂₁O₄]⁺, 153.1 (31.3%) [C₇H₅O₄]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3484, 2959, 2934, 2873, 1642, 1581, 1558, 1330, 1197, 1108, 958, 727 cm⁻¹. - C₄₉H₉₂O₄N₂·0.33 CH₃OH: C 65.45, H 7.79 N, 5.86; found: C 65.39, H 7.38, N 5.83.

Synthesis of 5c. To a solution of **3e** (0.091 g, 0.2 mmol) in MeOH (20 mL), 0.036 g (0.26 mmol) of **4** were added. The mixture was refluxed for 24 h. After cooling to 0 °C a precipitate was formed, which was filtered and washed with cold MeOH (10 mL). After drying under high vacuum the product was obtained as a grey solid in 86% yield (100 mg, 0.174 mmol). Melting point: 136–138 °C. - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 11.95 (s, 1H), 11.05 (s, 1H), 9.23 (s, 1H), 8.62 (s, 6H), 7.53–7.36 (m, 17H), 6.99 (dd, 1H, *J* = 7.67 Hz, *J* = 1.48 Hz), 6.87 (dd, 1H, *J* = 7.92 Hz, *J* = 1.49 Hz), 6.75 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.79 Hz), 5.22 (s, 4H), 5.04 (s, 2H). - MS (EI, 70 eV): *m/z* (%) = 574.4 (19%) [M]⁺, 91.1 (100%) [C₇H₇]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3436, 3247, 1580, 1501, 1334, 1222, 1122, 970, 965, 730 cm⁻¹.

General procedure for the preparation of the complexes

To a solution of one of the ligands **5a**–**H**₂ to **5c**–**H**₂ (3.0 equiv.) in MeOH (25 mL), 3.0 equiv. of K₂CO₃ were added. A yellowish solution formed. 3.0 equiv. of LaCl₃·7H₂O as well as Ga(acac)₃

were added. The mixture was stirred over night. The product was filtered off and washed with MeOH and Et₂O.

[(5a)₃GaLa]. Yield: 0.040 g (91%). - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ 12.43 (s, 1H), 8.40 (s, 1H), 7.10 (s, 2H), 6.40 (br.s, 3H), 3.88 (br.s, 2H), 3.57 (br.s, 2H), 3.38 (br.s, 2H), 1.66–1.44 (m, 6H), 0.95(t, 3H, *J* = 7.54 Hz), 0.89 (t, 6H, *J* = 7.54 Hz). - MS (ESI-): *m/z* (%) = 1650.88 (100%) ([LaGa[5a]₃+CH₃O]⁻). - IR (KBr): ν = 2966, 2938, 1604, 1567, 1454, 1253, 1217, 1118, 737 cm⁻¹. - C₆₉H₈₄GaLaN₆O₁₈·3 H₂O: C 53.53, H 5.68, N 5.43; found: C 53.47, H 5.63, N 5.44.

[(5b)₃GaLa]. Yield: 0.042 g (90%). - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ = 12.45 (s, 1H), 8.40 (s, 1H), 7.10 (s, 2H), 6.32–6.48 (m, 3H), 3.88 (t, 2H, *J* = 7.45 Hz), 3.60 (br.s, 2H), 3.41 (br.s, 2H), 1.63–1.30 (m, 12H), 0.90 (t, 3H, *J* = 7.42 Hz), 0.87 (t, 6H, *J* = 7.17 Hz). - MS (ESI-): *m/z* (%) = 1491.33 (80%) ([LaGa[5b]₃-H]⁻, 925.33(100%)[Ga[5b]]⁻). - IR (KBr): ν = 2958, 2934, 2872, 1600, 1566, 1497, 1453, 1427, 1375, 1337, 1253, 1215, 1105, 1059, 864, 736 cm⁻¹. - C₇₈H₁₀₂GaLaN₆O₁₈·3 H₂O: C 55.95, H 6.50, N 5.02; found: C 55.85, H 6.39, N 5.01.

[(5c)₃GaLa]. Yield: 0.013 g (81%). - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, DMSO-d₆): δ = 12.43 (s, 1H), 8.49 (s, 1H), 7.43–7.08 (m, 17H), 6.46–6.41 (m, 3H), 4.78 (br.s, 2H), 4.60 (br.s, 2H), 3.20 (br.s, 2H). - IR (KBr): ν = 3032, 1567, 1452, 1371, 1337, 1250, 1215, 1103, 973, 847, 823, 733, 694 cm⁻¹. - C₁₀₅H₈₄GaLaN₆O₁₈·12 H₂O: C 58.86, H 5.08, N 3.92; found: C 58.27, H 4.10, N 3.85.

Synthesis of 7-H₂. A mixture of *N'*-phenylbenzhydrazine **6** (550 mg, 2.6 mmol) and 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde **4** (280 mg, 2.0 mmol; 1 eq) was dissolved in 10 mL CHCl₃. The mixture was heated to reflux for 7 h and then was stirred over night. After recrystallization from 15 mL CHCl₃, the product was dried under vacuum. A brown solid was obtained in quantitative yield (684 mg, 2.0 mmol). Melting point: 170 °C. - ¹H NMR (400 MHz, 25 °C, CD₃OD): δ = 7.88 (s, 1 H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.62 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 1 H), 7.56–7.44 (m, 4 H), 7.39 (m, 3 H), 6.77 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1 H), 6.65 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 6.62 (dd, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1 H). - MS (EI, 70 eV): *m/z* (%) = 332.1 (6.24) [M]⁺, 105.1 (100) [C₇H₅O]⁺, 77.2 (44.88) [C₆H₅]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3351, 3024, 2322, 2079, 1631, 1489, 1410, 1340, 1259, 1211, 1026, 842, 747, 696 cm⁻¹. - C₂₀H₁₆N₂O₃·CHCl₃: C 55.84, H 3.79, N 6.20; found: C 55.72, H 3.94, N 6.36.

[(7)₃GaLa]. Ligand 7-H₂ (70 mg, 0.2 mmol), K₂CO₃ (15 mg, 0.105 mmol), LaCl₃·7H₂O (26 mg, 0.07 mmol) and Ga(acac)₃ (25 mg, 0.07 mmol; 1 Åq) were dissolved in 8 mL MeOH and the mixture was stirred for 12 h at RT. A yellow solid precipitated, which was filtered off, washed with MeOH and dried under high vacuum. The product was obtained in 50% yield (42 mg, 0.035 mmol). ¹H NMR (300 MHz, 25 °C, DMSO-d₆): 7.84 (s, 1H), 7.45 (m, 5 H), 6.98 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 1 H), 6.76 (d, 2H, *J* = 7.4 Hz), 6.50 (d, 2H, *J* = 7.4 Hz), 6.38 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.67 Hz), 6.08 (m, 2H). - positive ESI MS: *m/z* (%) = 1199.33 (100%) [LaGa[6]₃+H]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3666, 3349, 3060, 2745, 2321, 2079, 1567, 1545, 1451, 1424, 1369, 1262, 1209, 1013, 872, 768, 729, 697, 660 cm⁻¹. - C₆₀H₄₂N₆O₉GaLa·2H₂O: C 58.32, H 3.75, N 6.80; found: C 57.89, H 3.46, N 6.76.

Crystal data. [(7)₃GaLa]: C₆₇H₅₉N₇O₁₁GaLa: formula weight 1346.84, monoclinic, space group *P*2₁/*n*, *a* = 15.864(3), *b* =

23.356(3), *c* = 17.036(2) Å, β = 104.622(14)°, *V* = 6107.5(16) Å³, *Z* = 4, *T* = 110(2)K, Mo-Kα, ρ = 1.465 g cm⁻³, μ = 1.199 mm⁻¹, 41590 collected data, 9287 unique reflections (θ_{max} = 23.75°), *R*_{int} = 0.1135, 3360 observed reflections [*I* > 2σ(*I*)], GOF = 0.606, *R*₁ [*I* > 2σ(*I*)] = 0.0406, w*R*₂ (all data) = 0.0601. Crystallographic data for the structure has been deposited with the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre as supplementary publication no. CCDC 789894.† Copies of the data can be obtained free of charge on application to CHGC, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK (Fax: +44-1223-336033 or E-Mail: deposit@ccdc.cam.ac.uk).

Synthesis of 10. *N*-Acyl-L-valine **9** (330 mg, 2.07 mmol) was dissolved in 15 mL DMF. EDC (448 mg, 2.34 mmol) and HOBt (316 mg, 2.34 mmol) were added to the solution. After stirring of the mixture for 30 min, a solution of 4-aminomethylbenzoate **8** (469 mg, 3.10 mmol) in 10 mL DMF was added. The mixture was stirred for 4 days at room temperature. After that the solvent was removed under high vacuum and the rest was dissolved in DCM, washed with NH₄Cl, NaHCO₃, H₂O and brine, dried with Na₂SO₄ and solvent was removed using rotary evaporation. The product was purified by column chromatography DCM/MeOH (10 : 1). A white solid was obtained in 38% yield (239 mg, 0.79 mmol). Melting point: 200–202 °C. - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CD₃OD-d₄): δ = 7.85 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.66 Hz), 7.60 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.66 Hz), 6.54 (d, 1H, *J* = 8.41 Hz), 2.02 (sept, 1H, *J* = 6.92 Hz), 1.92 (s, 3H), 0.92 (d, 6H, *J* = 6.68 Hz). - MS (EI, 70eV): *m/z* (%) = 292.3 (2.09%) [M]⁺, 190.2 (1.12%) [C₁₁H₁₂NO₂]⁺, 151.2 (53.53%) [C₈H₈NO₂]⁺, 120.2 (25.07%) [C₅H₇NO₂]⁺, 114.2 (40.04%) [C₆H₁₂NO]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3308, 3117, 3017, 2965, 2850, 2433, 1925, 1713, 1652, 1602, 1538, 1436, 1410, 1381, 1283, 1175, 1111, 1016, 966, 927, 856, 758, 698, 667, 599, 513 cm⁻¹. - HRMS calculated for C₁₅H₂₀O₄Na: 315.13174 found: 315.13153.

Synthesis of 11. To a methanolic solution of 4-(amino(S)-*N*-acylvaline) methylbenzoate **10** (90 mg, 0.31 mmol), 0.5 mL NH₂NH₂·H₂O were added. The mixture was heated to reflux for 48 h. The solvent was removed under rotary evaporation and the product was recrystallized from MeOH/Et₂O. A white solid was obtained in 70% yield (63 mg, 0.22 mmol). Melting point: 215.9–217.6 °C. - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CD₃OD): δ = 7.76 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.90 Hz), 7.69 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.90 Hz), 4.29 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.67 Hz), 2.05 (m, 1H), 1.98 (s, 3H), 1.02 (d, 6H, *J* = 6.68 Hz). - MS (EI, 70eV): *m/z* (%) = 292.3 (0.83%) [M]⁺, 261.3 (7.59%) [C₁₄H₁₇N₂O₃]⁺, 151.2 (19.90%) [C₈H₈NO₂]⁺, 120.2 (100.00%) [C₅H₇NO₂]⁺. - IR (KBr): ν = 3842, 3283, 2961, 2707, 2421, 2284, 2421, 2284, 2166, 2076, 1992, 1918, 1776, 1634, 1525, 1439, 1405, 1380, 1333, 1252, 1196, 1113, 962, 849, 762, 718, 670 cm⁻¹. - C₁₄H₂₀N₄O₃·H₂O (292.1): C 54.18 H 7.15 N 18.05; found C 52.82 H 6.78 N 18.35; HRMS calculated for C₁₄H₂₀O₃Na: 315.14276 found: 315.14240.

Synthesis of 12-H₂. To a methanolic solution of 4-(amino(S)-*N*-acylvaline) methylbenzohydrazid **11** (160 mg, 0.55 mmol), a methanolic solution of 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde **4** (76 mg, 0.55 mmol) was added. The mixture was stirred for 24 h at room temperature. The solvent was removed under rotary evaporation and the product was recrystallized from MeOH/Et₂O. A grey solid was obtained in 64% yield (143 mg, 0.35 mmol). Melting point: 270.8–273.7 °C. - ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CD₃OD): δ = 8.45 (s, 1H), 7.92 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.17 Hz), 7.78 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.17 Hz), 6.88 (m, 2H), 6.79 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.66 Hz), 4.29 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.67 Hz),

2.10 (m, 1H), 1.98 (s, 3H), 1.02 (2 s, 6H). - MS (EI,70eV): m/z (%) = 412.2 (15.11%) $[M]^+$, 261.2 (19.31%) $[C_{14}H_{17}N_2O_3]^+$, 136.1 (68.40%) $[C_7H_6NO_2]^+$, 120.1 (100.00%) $[C_5H_7NO_2]^+$. - IR (KBr): ν = 3844, 3612, 3487, 3377, 3285, 3054, 2966, 2933, 2876, 2696, 2473, 2321, 2288, 2163, 2058, 1971, 1942, 1923, 1859, 1744, 1688, 1602, 1531, 1468, 1409, 1367, 1310, 1185, 1100, 1062, 1018, 902, 851, 783, 761, 731, 686, 659 cm^{-1} . - $C_{21}H_{24}N_4O_5$ (412.2): C 61.15 H 5.87 N 13.58; found C 60.81 H 5.05 N 11.58.

[(12)₃GaLa]. Ligand **12-H₂** (22 mg, 0.053 mmol), K_2CO_3 (5 mg, 0.027 mmol), $LaCl_3 \cdot 7H_2O$ (6.6 mg, 0.017 mmol) and $Ga(acac)_3$ (6 mg, 0.017 mmol) were dissolved in 10 mL DMF and the mixture was stirred for 24 h at RT. Precipitated salt was filtered off and DMF was removed under high vacuum. The product was obtained as yellow solid in 82% yield (20 mg, 0.014 mmol). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, 25 °C, CD_3OD): δ = 8.67 (s, 1H), 7.94 (d, 2H, J = 8.9 Hz), 7.58 (d, 2H, J = 8.9 Hz), 6.82 (d, 1H, J = 7.7 Hz), 6.75(d, 1H, J = 7.7 Hz), 6.50 (t, 1H, J = 7.7 Hz), 4.29 (d, 1H, J = 7.7 Hz), 2.10 (m, 1H), 2.00 (s, 3H), 0.98 (2 s, 6H). - positive ESI MS: m/z (%) = 1477.3 $[(12)_3LaGaK]^+$. - IR (KBr): ν = 3850, 3304, 3055, 2967, 2874, 2659, 2321, 2169, 2105, 1997, 1734, 1658, 1602, 1517, 1450, 1376, 1251, 1164, 1035, 855, 745, 686 cm^{-1} . - $C_{63}H_{66}N_{12}O_{15}GaLa \cdot 4 KCl$: C 43.54, H 3.83, N 9.67, found: C 43.40, H 3.98, N 9.59.

Synthesis of 14. To a methanolic solution of N-acyl-L-phenylalanine methylester **13** (286 mg, 1.21 mmol), 0.2 mL of hydrazinmonohydrate (2.64 mmol) were added and the solution was stirred at RT for 2 days. The solvent was removed under high vacuum. A white solid was obtained in quantitative yield (286 mg, 1.21 mmol). Melting point: 177.3–178.3 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD_3OD): δ = 7.13 (m, 5H), 4.45 (dd, 1H, J = 8.6, 2.0 Hz), 2.97 (dd, 1H, J = 13.6, 6.6 Hz), 2.77 (dd, 1H, J = 13.6, 8.62 Hz), 1.79 (s, 3H). - MS (EI, 70eV): m/z (%) = 222.1 (2.22%) $[M+H]^+$, 190.1 (54.60%) $[C_{11}H_{12}NO_2]^+$, 120.1 (100%) $[C_5H_7NO_2]^+$. - IR (KBr): ν = 3299, 3034, 2322, 1740, 1636, 1531, 1374, 1292, 1254, 1103, 1035, 939, 750, 699, 667 cm^{-1} . - $C_{11}H_{15}N_3O_2$ (221.1): C 59.71, H 6.83, N 18.99; found C 59.41, H 6.12, N 18.87.

Synthesis of 15-H₂. A mixture of N-acetyl-L-phenylalaninehydrazide **14** (100 mg, 0.4253 mmol) and 2,3-dihydroxybenzaldehyde **4** (59 mg, 0.4253 mmol) were dissolved in 15 mL MeOH and heated to reflux for 7 h. After that the solvent was removed and the product was recrystallized from 5 mL MeOH/Et₂O (1 : 3). A light yellow solid was obtained in 70% yield (101 mg, 0.30 mmol). Melting point: 211.4–214 °C. ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CD_3OD): δ = 8.16 (s, 1H), 7.25 (m, 5H), 6.85 (dd, 1H, J = 7.7, 1.7 Hz), 6.80 (dd, 1H, J = 7.7, 1.7 Hz), 6.72 (t, 1H, J = 7.7 Hz), 4.65 (t, 1H, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.15 (dd, 1H, J = 13.6, 7.2 Hz), 2.97 (dd, 1H, J = 13.6, 7.2 Hz), 1.93 (s, 3H). - MS (EI,70eV): m/z (%) = 341.1 (5.60%) $[M]^+$, 190.1 (49.09%) $[C_{11}H_{12}NO_2]^+$, 120.2 (100%) $[C_5H_7NO_2]^+$. - IR (KBr): ν = 3520, 3264, 3061, 2925, 2857, 2738, 2319, 2113, 1756, 1649, 1540, 1470, 1362, 1266, 1064, 1038, 958, 845, 782, 731, 697 cm^{-1} . - $C_{18}H_{19}N_3O_4 \cdot H_2O$ (341.1): C 60.16, H 5.89, N 11.69; found C 60.68, H 5.90, N 12.19.

[(15)₃GaLa]. Ligand **15-H₂** (30 mg, 0.088 mmol), K_2CO_3 (15 mg, 0.105 mmol), $LaCl_3 \cdot 7H_2O$ (11 mg, 0.029 mmol) and $Ga(acac)_3$ (10.7 mg, 0.029 mmol) were dissolved in 10 mL DMF and the mixture was stirred for 48 h at RT. Salts were filtered off and DMF was removed under high vacuum. The product was

obtained as an orange solid in 84% yield (30 mg, 0.024 mmol). ¹H NMR (300 MHz, 25 °C, CD_3OD): δ = 8.19 (s, 1H), 7.2 (m, 5 H, CHPh) 6.90 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 6.63 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 6.40 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 4.60 (s, 1H), 3.07 (m, 2H), 1.89 (s, 3H). - positive ESI MS: m/z (%) = 1226.53 (50%) $[LaGa(15)_3+H]^+$. - IR (KBr): ν = 3225, 3030, 2927, 2810, 2616, 2453, 2321, 2231, 2202, 2105, 2051, 1992, 1957, 1886, 1601, 1551, 1453, 1375, 1254, 1216, 1056, 959, 867, 785, 742, 699 cm^{-1} . - $C_{54}H_{51}N_9O_{12}GaLa \cdot 4H_2O \cdot 7 KCl$: C 35.62, H 3.27, N 6.92, found: C 35.87, H 3.31, N 6.73.

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