1358 *Organometallics* **2003,** *22,* 1358−1360

# The First Coordination of an (α-Diazo)phosphine to a Transition-Metal Center

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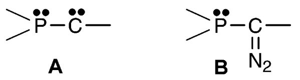
*Received December 30, 2002*

*Summary: Reaction of [o-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl][bis(diisopropylamino)phosphino]diazomethane (**1**) with tetracarbonylbis(μ-chloro)dirhodium(I) ($[Rh(CO)_2(\mu\text{-}Cl)]_2$) affords the monometallic complex **2** at low temperature and the dinuclear complex **3** upon warming to 0 °C. X-ray diffraction studies demonstrate that the coordination occurs via the phosphorus lone pair with retention of the diazo moiety in both complexes.*

Over the last 10 years, N-heterocyclic carbenes (NHCs) have become commonplace ligands, finding applications as scaffolds in a broad range of transition-metal-mediated transformations.[1] Despite the availability of NHCs as free, stable species,[2] many of the catalytically relevant metal complexes are prepared from masked forms (such as conjugated acids,[3] dimers,[4] alcohol adducts,[5] etc.).

In contrast, the coordination chemistry of the other family of stable carbenes, namely (phosphino)carbenes **A**, has been somewhat overlooked (Chart 1).[6−8] The first (phosphino)carbene complexes were prepared (in poor yields) either by coupling a metal-bound carbyne ligand with a phosphorus fragment or, alternatively, by C−H activation of $PMe_3$.[6] We have recently shown that direct complexation is also feasible,[9] both $\eta^1$- as well as $\eta^2$-rhodium(I) complexes being obtained from a stable (phosphino)(aryl)carbene.[10] Since all the (phosphino)carbenes are extremely moisture sensitive, we became interested in using their considerably more robust diazo precursors **B**[11] as potential synthons for the preparation of (phosphino)carbene complexes. Indeed, ever since the pioneering work of Yates,[12a] Werner,[12b−d] and Hermann,[12e−g] diazo compounds have routinely been used to prepare transition-metal carbene complexes. Here, we report that, surprisingly, (α-diazo)phosphines **B** coordinate[13] to rhodium(I) via the phosphorus lone pair, with retention of the diazo moiety. The resulting mono- and dinuclear complexes **2** and **3** are the first rhodium(I) *cis*-chloro dicarbonyl phosphine and dinuclear monosubstituted complexes, respectively, to be structurally characterized.

**Chart 1. Structures of (Phosphino)carbenes A and (α-Diazo)phosphines B**



The (α-diazo)phosphine **1**,[10c] featuring the *o*-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl substituent, and tetracarbonylbis(μ-chloro)dirhodium(I) were chosen because both fragments afford an interesting compromise between stability and reactivity. Irrespective of the temperature, addition of $^1/_2$ equiv of $[Rh(CO)_2(\mu\text{-}Cl)]_2$ to **1** in diethyl ether led to a mixture of starting material **1** and the P-coordinated complex **2**, as deduced from the $^{31}$P NMR chemical shift

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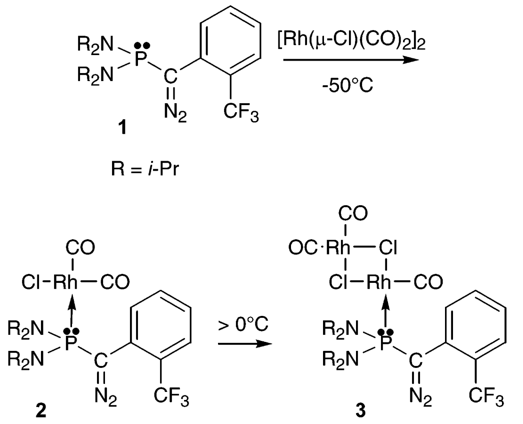
**Scheme 1. Synthesis of Complexes 2 and 3**



(118.1 ppm) and the magnitude of the $J_{PRh}$ coupling constant (162 Hz). To achieve complete conversion of **1**, an excess of $[Rh(CO)_2(\mu\text{-}Cl)]_2$ was required.[14] Complex **2** is indefinitely stable in solution at −50 °C but evolves over a period of a few hours at 0 °C to afford the new P-coordinated complex **3**, as a 4/1 mixture of the two NMR-distinguishable conformers **3a** and **3b** ($^{31}P$ NMR 126.8 and 127.8 ppm) (Scheme 1). Complex **3** is also stable for days at −50 °C but decomposes within the space of a few hours at room temperature, leading to a complex mixture of products. No trace of the desired (phosphino)carbene complex could be detected. Complexes **2**[16] and **3**[17] were characterized at low temperature by multinuclear NMR spectroscopy[18] as well as through X-ray diffraction studies.[19]

The monometallic structure and cis geometry of **2** were suggested by the presence of two carbonyl resonances in the $^{13}C$ NMR spectrum that exhibit $^2J_{PC}$ coupling constants of 16 and 155 Hz, respectively.[20a] These structural features were confirmed by an X-ray analysis[19] performed on single crystals obtained from a saturated diethyl ether solution of **2** at −80 °C. The molecular structure of **2** is shown in Figure 1 along with the pertinent metric parameters.

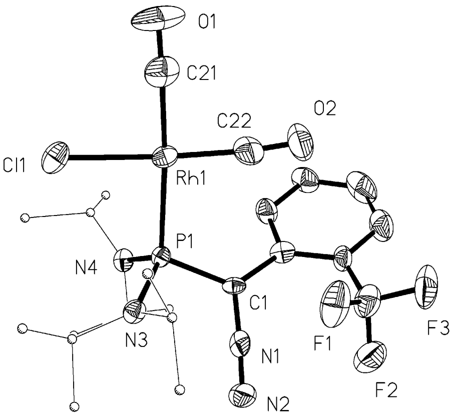


**Figure 1.** Molecular structure of **2** in the solid state. For clarity the hydrogen atoms are omitted and the isopropyl groups are simplified. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (deg): P1−C1 = 1.818(7), P1−Rh1 = 2.367(2), Rh1−C22 = 1.824(9), Rh1−C21 = 1.895(8), P1−N3 = 1.691(5), P1−N4 = 1.674(5), Rh1−Cl1 = 2.364(2), Rh1−C21 = 1.895(8), Rh1−C22 = 1.824(9); P1−C1−N1 = 115.8(4), P1−C1−C2 = 126.6(4), N1−C1−C2 = 117.2(5), C1−P1−N3 = 100.7(3), C1−P1−N4 = 105.8(3), C1−P1−Rh1 = 112.7(2), P1−Rh1−Cl1 = 90.46(7), P1−Rh1−C21 = 175.7(2), P1−Rh1−C22 = 95.6(2).

The rhodium center adopts a slightly distorted square planar geometry ($\Sigma_{angles} = 360.26°$), with the phosphorus−rhodium bond distance (2.367(2) Å) being at the longer end of the range typical for P−Rh single bonds.[21] A significant inequivalence of the Rh−C bond distances for the two carbonyl ligands (Rh−CO(cis to P) = 1.824(9) Å and Rh−CO(trans to P) = 1.895(8) Å) is observed, something that is consistent with the different trans influences of phosphine and chloride. Complex **2** is the first rhodium(I) *cis*-chloro dicarbonyl phosphine complex to be structurally characterized. Until recently, such complexes had only been identified spectroscopically in solution,[20] as in general they evolve to dimeric complexes of the type $[Rh(\mu\text{-}Cl)(CO)(phosphine)]_2$ with loss of CO. The stability of **2** probably results from the

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[14] The propensity of bis(diisopropylamino)phosphines to react with $[Rh(CO)_2(\mu\text{-}Cl)]_2$ strongly depends on the steric constraints of the third substituent of the phosphorus.[15] An excess of rhodium complex allows the coordination equilibration to be displaced and, thus, to complete the conversion of **1**.

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[16] To an ether solution (5 mL) of [*o*-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl][bis(diisopropylamino)phosphino]diazomethane (**1**; 0.12 mmol) was added an ether solution (2 mL) of tetracarbonylbis($\mu$-chloro)dirhodium(I) ($[Rh(CO)_2(\mu\text{-}Cl)]_2$; 0.12 mmol) at −50 °C. After the mixture was stirred for 30 min at this temperature, complex **2** was obtained in quantitative yield (according to $^{31}P$ NMR spectroscopy). Orange crystals of **2** (38 mg, 52%) were obtained by cooling the ether solution to −80 °C. Mp: 75 °C dec.

[17] To an ether solution (5 mL) of [*o*-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl][bis(diisopropylamino)phosphino]diazomethane (**1**; 0.12 mmol) was added an ether solution (2 mL) of tetracarbonylbis($\mu$-chloro)dirhodium(I) ($[Rh(CO)_2(\mu\text{-}Cl)]_2$; 0.12 mmol) at room temperature. After the mixture was stirred for 30 min at this temperature, 1 mL of pentane was added and yellow crystals of **3** (60 mg, 64%) were obtained by cooling the solution to −20 °C. Mp: 63 °C dec.

[18] Selected spectroscopic data are as follows. For **2**: $^{19}F$ (376.5 MHz, $C_7D_8$, 223 K) $\delta$ 17.3; $^{31}P$ (162 MHz, $C_7D_8$, 223 K) $\delta$ 118.1 (d, $^1J_{PRh} = 162$ Hz); $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ (100.6 MHz, $C_7D_8$, 223 K) $\delta$ 51.2 (dd, $^1J_{PC} = 32$ Hz, $^2J_{CRh} = 7$ Hz, $CN_2$), 181.8 (dd, $^2J_{PC} = 155$ Hz, $^1J_{CRh} = 71$ Hz, CO), 181.8 (dd, $^2J_{PC} = 16$ Hz, $^1J_{CRh} = 71$ Hz, CO). For **3a**: $^{31}P$ (162 MHz, $C_7D_8$, 223 K) $\delta$ 126.8 (d, $^1J_{PRh} = 220$ Hz); $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ (100.6 MHz, $C_7D_8$, 223 K) $\delta$ 52.5 (dd, $^1J_{PC} = 6$ Hz, $^2J_{CRh} = 10$ Hz, $CN_2$), 179.4 (d, $^1J_{CRh} = 76$ Hz, CO), 180.1 (d, $^1J_{CRh} = 76$ Hz, CO), 183.8 (dd, $^2J_{PC} = 16$ Hz, $^1J_{CRh} = 87$ Hz, CO). For **3b**: $^{31}P$ (162 MHz, $C_7D_8$, 223 K) $\delta$ 127.8 (d, $^1J_{PRh} = 224$ Hz).

[19] Crystal data for **2** and **3** are as follows. **2**: orthorhombic, space group $P2_12_12_1$; $T = 173$ K; $a = 11.377(2)$ Å, $b = 11.556(2)$ Å, $c = 20.805(3)$ Å, $V = 2735.2(6)$ Å$^3$, $Z = 4$, R1 ($I > 2\sigma(I)$) = 0.0439, wR2 (all data) = 0.0755 for 3930 unique reflections, 316 parameters, GOF = 0.999. **3**: triclinic, space group $P\bar{1}$; $T = 173$ K; $a = 9.046(2)$ Å, $b = 9.341(2)$ Å, $c = 21.629(4)$ Å, $\alpha = 80.909(3)°$, $\beta = 83.124(4)°$, $\gamma = 82.532(4)°$, $V = 1780.2(5)$ Å$^3$, $Z = 2$, R1 ($I > 2\sigma(I)$) = 0.0530, wR2 (all data) = 0.1181 for 5049 unique reflections, 491 parameters, GOF = 0.984. Data for both structures were collected at low temperatures using an oil-coated shock-cooled crystal on a Bruker-AXS CCD 1000 diffractometer with graphite-monochromated Mo K$\alpha$ ($\lambda = 0.710\ 73$ Å) radiation. The structures were solved by direct methods using SHELXS-97[26] and refined with all data on $F^2$ using SHELXL-97.[27] All non-hydrogen atoms were treated anisotropically. The hydrogen atoms were geometrically idealized and refined using a riding model. Crystallographic data (excluding structure factors) have been deposited with the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre as Supplementary Publication Nos. CCDC-203087 (**2**), 203088 (**3**), and 203089 (**3′**). Copies of the data can be obtained free of charge on application to the CCDC, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1 EZ, U.K. (fax, (+44)1223-336-033; email, deposit@ccdc.cam.ac.uk).

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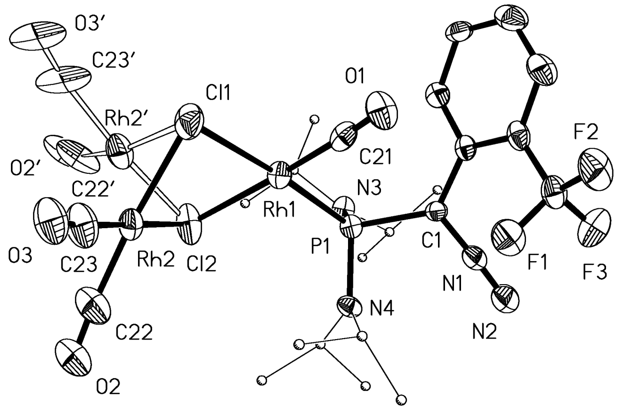

**Figure 2.** Molecular structure of **3** in the solid state. For clarity the hydrogen atoms are omitted and the isopropyl groups are simplified. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (deg): P1−C1 = 1.831(7), P1−Rh1 = 2.237(2), P1−N3 = 1.689(6), P1−N4 = 1.686(6), Rh1−Cl1 = 2.435(2), Rh1−Cl2 = 2.408(2), Rh1−C21 = 1.817(8); P1−C1−N1 = 115.5(5), P1−C1−C2 = 125.7(5), N1−C1−C2 = 118.3(6), C1−P1−N3 = 104.6(3), C1−P1−N4 = 100.2(3), C1−P1−Rh1 = 115.0(2), P1−Rh1−Cl1 = 175.75(8), P1−Rh1−Cl2 = 93.86(8), P1−Rh1−C21 = 94.1(2).

elevated basicity and poor $\pi$-acceptance of the phosphorus center of the bis(dialkylamino)phosphine moiety bound to rhodium.[15] Significantly, there is no interaction between the metal center and the diazo moiety.

The observation of three sets of signals for the carbonyl groups in the $^{13}C$ NMR spectrum for the major conformer of **3** was in favor of a dinuclear complex. The exact structure of both conformers was revealed by an X-ray diffraction study carried out on single crystals obtained from a diethyl ether/pentane solution of **3** at −20 °C. Complex **3** is a dinuclear rhodium(I) complex with two bridging chlorine atoms and a single coordinated (α-diazo)phosphine (Figure 2).[22]

The low-temperature $^{31}P$ NMR spectrum of a single crystal of **3** revealed that the same 4/1 ratio of conformers was present in the solid state and in solution. The two conformers differ in the geometry associated with the Rh1−Cl1−Cl2−Rh2 plane, with the major conformer adopting a "butterfly" arrangement about the Cl1−Cl2 vector, while for the minor conformer Rh1, Cl1, Cl2, and Rh2′ are near coplanar. As for **2**, the Rh1 center of **3** adopts a distorted-square-planar geometry ($\sum_{\text{angles}}$ = 366.16°), the Rh1−P bond distance in **3** being slightly shortened compared to that determined for **2** (**3**, 2.237(2) Å; **2**, 2.367(2) Å); the two Rh1−Cl bond distances are inequivalent, as expected (Rh−Cl(cis to P) = 2.408(2) Å and Rh−Cl(trans to P) = 2.435(2) Å). As in **2**, the aryl ring of the ligand is orientated perpendicularly to the square coordination plane of Rh1. Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that the bulky *o*-trifluoromethyl group might impede rotation around the $C_{ipso}-C_{diazo}$ bond, giving rise to two conformers which differ as a consequence of syn and anti orientations of this $CF_3$ group toward the coordination plane about the second rhodium center. Although dinuclear monophosphine complexes analogous to **3** have been postulated as transient intermediates in the reaction of phosphines with tetracarbonylbis($\mu$-chloro)dirhodium(I), their structures have not been unambiguously determined.[20a]

The incorporation of **1** into the coordination sphere of rhodium without diazo decomposition is contrary to the reactivity often associated between diazo compounds and transition-metal salts. In many cases, even a catalytic amount of a transition-metal complex induces dinitrogen elimination,[23] only a very few complexes featuring an intact diazo moiety having been isolated.[24] The coordination of the (α-diazo)phosphine **1** via the phosphorus lone pair in preference to reaction at the diazo fragment is even more surprising, considering the presence of the bulky diisopropylamino groups.[25] Further studies into the coordination of (α-diazo)phosphines and on the use of the ensuing complexes as precursors for (phosphino)carbene complexes are currently in progress.

**Acknowledgment.** Thanks are due to the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Université Paul Sabatier, the University of Leicester, and the University of California at Riverside for financial support of this work.

**Supporting Information Available:** Text giving selected spectroscopic data for **2** and **3** and tables giving X-ray crystallographic data for **2** and **3**. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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(22) An investigation of the molecular structure of the mesityl analogue of **3** has been undertaken, and all relevant crystallographic data are reported in the Supporting Information. An geometry identical with that observed for **3** was determined. It should be noted that the mesityl derivative **3′** was considerably more reactive than **3**, making its characterization much more difficult.

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