Dalton Communications

Synthesis and Structural Characterisation of [Pd4(μ3-CH)-(μ-Cl)3(PBut3)4]: A Tetrahedral Palladium Cluster with a μ3-Methylidyne Ligand

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The compound [Pd4(μ3-CH)(μ-Cl)3(PBut3)4] has been synthesised from [Pd2(dba)3] (dba = dibenzylideneacetone), PBut3 and CHCl3 and characterised spectroscopically and by single-crystal X-ray analysis; it undergoes substitution reactions with Br− and tertiary phosphines and is a catalyst for the polymerisation of ethyne.

Alkylidyne carbonyl cluster compounds which have the CR (R = H, alkyl or aryl) group capping a triangular face of metal atoms (μ3-CR) are well documented for the Group 8 and 9 metals.[1,2] The ethylidyne ligand has also been identified spectroscopically on clean Pt(111) crystal surfaces[3,4] and has been implicated as an intermediate in heterogeneous catalytic processes involving the hydrogenation of CO and C2H2.[5,6] However, there have been no previous reports of alkylidyne cluster compounds of the Ni, Pd, Pt group of metals. Here we describe the synthesis and structural characterisation of [Pd4(μ3-CH)(μ-Cl)3(PBut3)4] **1** which provides the first example of such a compound.

When [Pd2(dba)3]·C6H6 (dba = dibenzylideneacetone) in toluene was treated with 2 mol equivalents of PBut3 the solution changed to dark orange after 1 h. On addition of 0.5 mol equivalent of CHCl3 the solution became dark green after 5 h. After the solvent had been removed crystals of [Pd4(μ3-CH)-(μ-Cl)3(PBut3)4] were obtained from acetone after cooling at 4 °C overnight (30% yield). A single-crystal X-ray analysis † of compound **1** has confirmed that it is a tetrahedral cluster with a face-capping methylidyne ligand. The molecular structure (Fig. 1) demonstrates that besides the μ3-methylidyne ligand the chlorine atoms of the CHCl3 molecule are retained within the cluster and bridge three edges, giving an effective C3v symmetry to the metal cluster skeleton. The resulting cluster is sterically strained by the presence of the bridging groups and

the bulky PBut3 ligands and consequently the Pd–Pd bonds cover a wide range of lengths from 2.6683(11) to 3.1431(11) Å. In contrast the related tetrahedral gold cluster [Au4(PBut3)4]2+, which has no bridging ligands, has Au–Au bonds which vary from 2.7031(9) to 2.7302(7) Å.[8] The Pd–Pd bonds bridged by Cl ligands are all longer than 2.947 Å and the three bonds in the triangle capped by CH are shorter than 2.744 Å. The steric strain is also reflected in the presence of a long Pd(2)–Cl(7) bond [2.939(3) Å] which is much longer than the remaining Pd–Cl bonds which lie between 2.391(2) and 2.430(2) Å. The Pd–P distances vary in length from 2.359(2) to 2.374(2) Å. The Pd–C bond lengths to the methylidyne ligand average 1.955(8) Å, which is close to that reported for the ethylidyne ligand on a Pt(111) surface.[3]

The 31P-{1H} NMR spectrum ‡ shows a quartet and a doublet which is consistent with a C3v structure in solution. The methylidyne 1H NMR resonance is observed as a doublet of quartets at δ 11.6 which is in the range previously reported for μ3-methylidyne complexes.[9] The CH stretching frequency is obscured by ligand vibrations, but ν(C–D) for the corresponding compound prepared from CDCl3 is observed at 2162 cm−1.
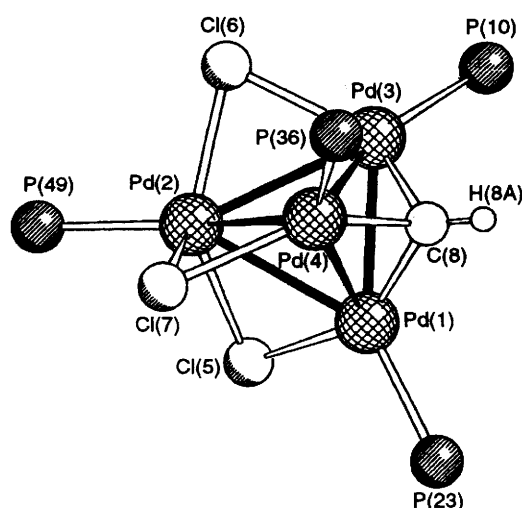
Although μ3-methylidyne cluster compounds have previously been synthesised from CHCl3,[2] this cluster is unique in retaining all the atoms of the CHCl3 molecule within the cluster. The final product appears structurally to document the effective chemisorption of a CHCl3 molecule by a tetrahedral metal cluster with simultaneous breaking of three C–Cl bonds, but this is unlikely to be an accurate reflection of the actual mechanism.

In the reaction of [Pd2(dba)3]·C6H6 with PBut3 and CHCl3 cyclometallated binuclear compounds similar to those previously reported[10] are also formed in a competing reaction which limits the yield of **1**. With CHBr3 and CHI3 no corresponding cluster compounds were formed, only cyclometallated products and [Pd2(μ-X)2(PBut3)2] (X = Br or I).[11]

The tetrahedral palladium cluster has a polyhedral electron

Fig. 1 Molecular structure of the cluster $[Pd_4(\mu_3\text{-}CH)(\mu\text{-}Cl)_3(PBu^t_3)_4]$ showing the atom numbering used. For clarity, the phosphine substituents have been omitted. Important bond lengths (Å) include: Pd(1)–C(8) 1.964(7), Pd(3)–C(8) 1.959(8), Pd(4)–C(8) 1.941(7), Pd(1)–Cl(5) 2.395(2), Pd(2)–Cl(5) 2.430(2), Pd(2)–Cl(6) 2.391(2), Pd(2)–Cl(7) 2.939(3), Pd(3)–Cl(6) 2.421(2), Pd(4)–Cl(7) 2.424(2), Pd(1)–P(23) 2.359(2), Pd(2)–P(49) 2.374(2), Pd(3)–P(10) 2.373(2), Pd(4)–P(36) 2.360(2), Pd(1)–Pd(2) 2.9886(10), Pd(1)–Pd(3) 2.7425(9), Pd(1)–Pd(4) 2.6683(11), Pd(2)–Pd(3) 2.9480(11), Pd(2)–Pd(4) 3.1431(11) and Pd(3)–Pd(4) 2.7444(12)
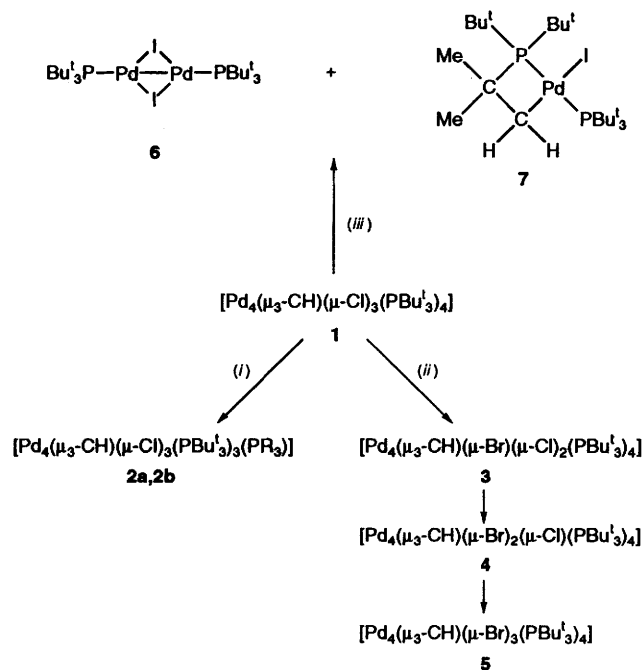
count of 60, which is the closed-shell requirement for a tetrahedral cluster which conforms to the polyhedral skeletal electron-pair theory.[12] Palladium is on the borderline of those elements which conform to this structural generalisation.[13,14]

The reactions of $[Pd_4(\mu_3\text{-}CH)(\mu\text{-}Cl)_3(PBu^t_3)_4]$ **1** which have been investigated to date are summarised in Scheme 1. The $^{31}P\text{-}\{^1H\}$ NMR§ spectra showed that the reaction with phosphines resulted only in the monosubstituted products **2a** and **2b** even when an excess of phosphine was used. In contrast, with LiBr sequential substitution of all of the bridging chlorides by bromides was observed and compounds **3–5** have been characterised by $^{31}P\text{-}\{^1H\}$ NMR studies.¶ Full substitution required *ca.* 2 h at room temperature. With LiI cluster degradation results and among the products detected by $^{31}P\text{-}\{^1H\}$ NMR spectroscopy are the binuclear metal–metal bonded palladium(I) compound **6**[11] and the palladium cyclometallated compound **7** which are formed in approximately equal yields.

The lability of complex **1** towards substitution reactions together with the $\mu_3\text{-}CH$ ligand suggested that it may have interesting catalytic chemistry. When ethyne was bubbled through a toluene solution (0.25 mmol dm^{-3}) of **1** poly(ethyne) was formed as a solid precipitate and was characterised by IR spectroscopy.[15]

Scheme 1 (*i*) PR_3 (R = Ph or C_6H_{11}); (*ii*) LiBr; (*iii*) LiI

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§ $^{31}P\text{-}\{^1H\}$ NMR ($[^2H_6]$acetone): **2a**, δ 97.1 (P_x, dt), 75.9 (P_a, dd) and 26.7 [P_b, dt, $^3J(P_aP_x)$ 125.6, $^3J(P_bP_x)$ 139.0, $^3J(P_aP_b)$ 20.4]; **2b**, δ 98.5 (P_x, dt), 76.5 (P_a, dd) and -2.0 [P_b, dt, $^3J(P_aP_x)$ 125.5, $^3J(P_bP_x)$ 139.0, $^3J(P_aP_b)$ 17.0 Hz].

¶ $^{31}P\text{-}\{^1H\}$ NMR ($[^2H_6]$acetone): **3**, δ 101.6 (P_x, dt), 78.9 (P_a, dt) and 72.2 [P_b, dd, $^3J(P_aP_x)$ 149.2, $^3J(P_bP_x)$ 128.8, $^3J(P_aP_b)$ 23.7]; **4**, δ 105.5 (P_x, dt), 77.3 (P_a, dd) and 71.2 [P_b, dt, $^3J(P_aP_x)$ 139.0, $^3J(P_bP_x)$ 128.8, $^3J(P_aP_b)$ 23.7]; **5**, δ 108.3 (q) and 76.5 [d, $^3J(PP)$ 149.0 Hz].