



High- and low-spin chelate complexes of iron featuring κ -C,X-CH₂C₆H₄X (X = NMe₂, PMe₂, PPh₂) and κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂ ligands

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ABSTRACT

Several C,X-chelate complexes of iron were generated via standard metathetical procedures. Treatment of FeCl₂ and L_nFeCl₂ (L = Me₂IPr, n = 1; PMe₃, n = 2) with anionic equivalents o-LiCH₂C₆H₄NMe₂, o-LiCH₂C₆H₄PPh₂, and LiCH₂PMe₂ led to the preparation of [Fe(o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂] κ - μ -CH₂,N-o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂ (**1**, X-ray), [μ -Fe(κ -C,P-o-CH₂C₆H₄PPh₂)₃][Li(TMEDA)₂] (**2**, X-ray), (Me₂IPr)Fe(CH₂C₆H₄-o-NMe₂)₂ (**3**-C,N), [(Me₂IPr)₂Fe](μ - κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂[Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂] (**4**, X-ray), and (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (**5**). CH-Bond activation of *cis*-(Me₃P)₄FeMe₂ with o-CH₃C₆H₄PMe₂ led to the generation of *trans,cis*-(PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂C₆H₄-o-PMe₂)₂ (**6**). Exposure of these compounds to [Cp₂Fe][PF₆], a 1e⁻ oxidant, or AdN₃, here construed as a 2e⁻ oxidant, led to degradation in all cases, usually with the generation of carbon-carbon coupled ligands as byproducts. The inability of these systems to permit access to higher iron oxidation states is discussed.

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1. Introduction

Recent attempts to generate formally Fe(IV) alkylidene complexes capable of conducting olefin metathesis [1–4] have centered on chelate derivatives of iron. Protonation of vinyl-containing chelate compounds generated cationic species [5], and subsequent nucleophilic attack of the imine portion of the chelate led to corresponding neutral derivatives [6]. As Fig. 1 illustrates, while the formal valence bond description of these complexes is Fe(IV), computational evidence supports an Fe(II) carbenium ion and a delocalized imino-vinyl resonance form as being dominant contributors to their electronic structures [7]. A number of other Fe(II) chelate complexes have been prepared as potential precursors to the desired alkylidenes, and these efforts are described herein. The reactivity patterns of the complexes are reconciled according to standard arguments, and through Charge Distribution Via Reporters (CDVR) [8], a new means of assessing the distribution of electron density in molecules.

2. Results

2.1. Ortho-phenyl derived chelates

2.1.1. [Fe(o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂] κ - μ -CH₂,N-o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂ (**1**)

In order to maximize the donor capacity of the carbon end of a chelate, an amine was considered as its counterpart, since its weak donation should be uncompetitive [9]. The treatment of ferrous chloride with 2 equiv Li(o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂) led to the generation of orange-brown [Fe(o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂] κ - μ -CH₂,N-o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂ (**1**), as illustrated in Scheme 1. The μ_{eff} of 8.5 μ_B obtained from Evans' method measurements [10] is consistent with two plausible scenarios: 1) two non-interacting iron centers ($\mu_{\text{SO}} = 6.9 \mu_B$) augmented by significant spin-orbit coupling expected for high spin d⁶ centers [11]; 2) two weakly ferromagnetically coupled iron centers (maximum: $S_T = 4$; $\mu_{\text{SO}} = 8.9 \mu_B$). The ¹H NMR spectrum of the paramagnetic compound was consistent with the structure illustrated, as confirmed by single crystal X-ray crystallography. Clearly, the aryl dialkyl amine donor was not strong enough to support a low spin environment. Attempts to prepare an Fe(III) derivative from 3 equiv of the lithium reagent and FeCl₃ afforded **1** and the C-C coupled oxidation product derived from straightforward coupling of the methylene fragments.

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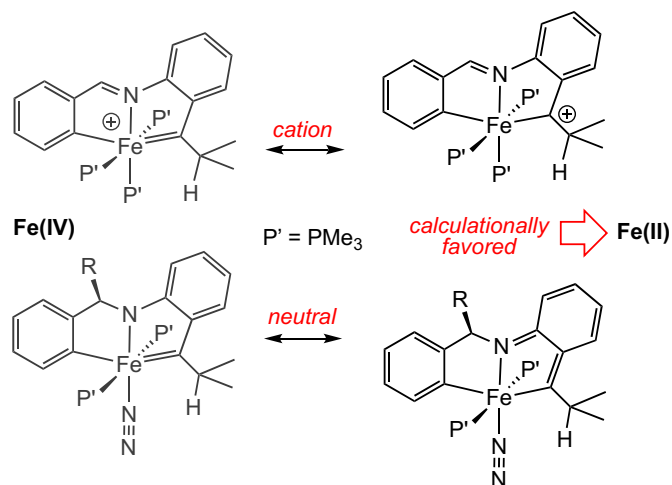


Fig. 1. Formal Fe(IV) cationic and neutral alkylidene chelates are computed to have a significant contribution from Fe(II) resonance forms.

2.1.2. Structure of $[\text{Fe}(\text{o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)]_2(\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{N-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2$ (**1**)

Fig. 2 illustrates a view of centrosymmetric dimer **1**, and its caption lists pertinent metric parameters. The structure is related to $[\text{Mn}(\text{o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)](\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{N-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2[\text{Mn}(\kappa^2\text{-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)]$, which contains one manganese center with a terminal benzyl, and one with an additional chelating unit [12,13]. Each iron center is a distorted tetrahedron, with one terminal $\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2$ ligand, an amine, and two bridging benzyl ligands, easily the most interesting feature of the molecule. The $\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{Ar})_2$ core is planar, with $\angle(\mu\text{-C18})\text{-Fe}(\mu\text{-C18}) = 106.98(6)^\circ$, and $\text{Fe}-\mu\text{-C18}-\text{Fe} = 73.01(6)^\circ$, while the $\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{N-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2$ chelate links the $\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{Ar}$ bridge to iron above and below the diamond core. The terminal benzyl carbon makes $113.46(8)$ and $124.60(8)^\circ$ angles with the bridging benzyl carbons, but the amine possesses dissimilar corresponding angles of $112.25(7)^\circ$ and $79.70(6)^\circ$, the latter acute due to chelation. The terminal iron-carbon and -nitrogen bond distances are $2.0650(19)$ and $2.2028(16)$ Å, respectively, which are typical values for high spin Fe(II) [14,15]. The bridges are slightly asymmetric, with $d(\text{Fe}-\mu\text{-C18}) = 2.136(2)$ and $2.221(2)$ Å, the lengthier distance affiliated with its chelating amine. While the CH bonds of the benzyls might

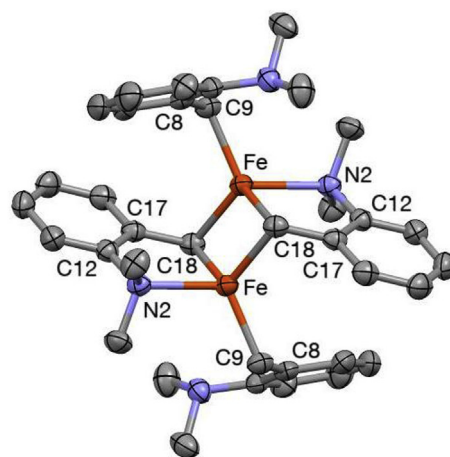


Fig. 2. Molecular view of $[\{\text{Me}_2\text{N}(\text{o-C}_6\text{H}_4)\text{CH}_2\}\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{N-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)]_2$ (**1**). Selected interatomic distances (Å) and angles ($^\circ$): Fe-Fe, 2.5930(5); Fe-C9, 2.0650(19); Fe- $\mu\text{-C18}$, 2.136(2), 2.221(2); Fe-N2, 2.2028(16); C18-C18, 2.593(3); C9-Fe- $\mu\text{-C18}$, $113.46(8)$, $124.60(8)$; C9-Fe-N2, $112.89(7)$; N2-Fe- $\mu\text{-C18}$, $79.70(6)$, $112.25(7)$; $\mu\text{-C18-Fe-}\mu\text{-C18}$, $106.98(6)$; Fe- $\mu\text{-C18-Fe}$, $73.01(6)$; Fe-C9-C8, $106.62(13)$; Fe- $\mu\text{-C18-C17}$, $108.74(12)$, $109.23(13)$; Fe-N2-C12, $111.68(11)$.

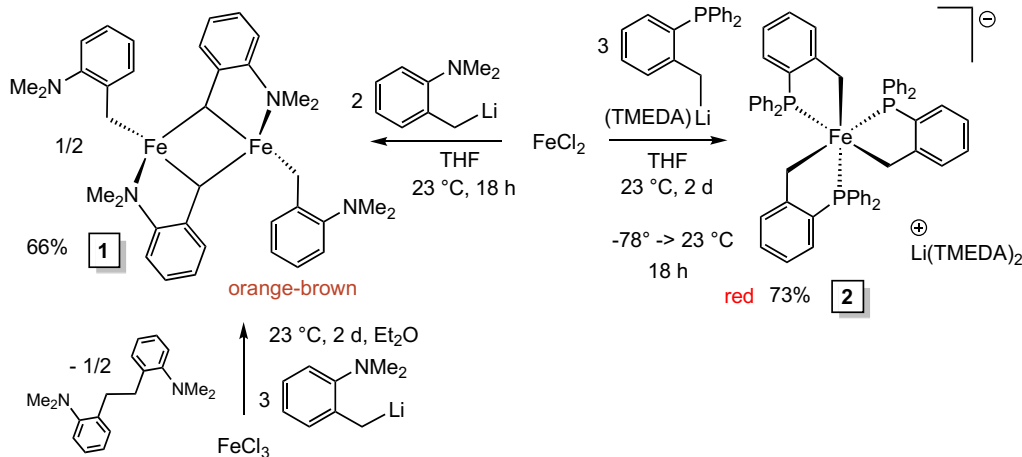
be construed as agostic, ranging from $2.00(2)$ – $3.02(2)$ Å, these distances are likely consequence of the benzyl geometry ($\text{Fe}(\mu\text{-C18})\text{-C17} = 108.74(12)$, $109.23(13)$) rather than any significant interaction with the high spin ferrous center.

2.1.3. $[\text{fac-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})]$ (**2**)

The high spin nature of the C,N-based chelates prompted a switch to phosphorus, and treatment of FeCl_2 with 3 equiv $\text{PPh}_2\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-CH}_2\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})$ [16] afforded microcrystalline red $[\text{fac-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})_2]$ (**2**) in 73% yield, as illustrated in Scheme 1. The ^1H NMR spectrum of **2** revealed broad resonances in positions indicative of a diamagnetic complex, consistent with a stronger field imparted by the C,P-bound chelates, but determination of the geometry depended on X-ray crystallography.

2.1.4. Structure of $[\text{fac-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})_2]$ (**2**)

The *fac*-geometry of $[\text{fac-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})_2]$ (**2**) was confirmed by an X-ray structural study, and the pseudo-octahedral, C_3 -symmetric ferrous anion is illustrated in Fig. 3, which is accompanied by metric parameters listed in its



Scheme 1. Syntheses of dimer $[\text{Fe}(\text{o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)]_2(\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{N-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2$ (**1**) and the pseudo-octahedral anionic complex $[\text{fac-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})_2]$ (**2**).

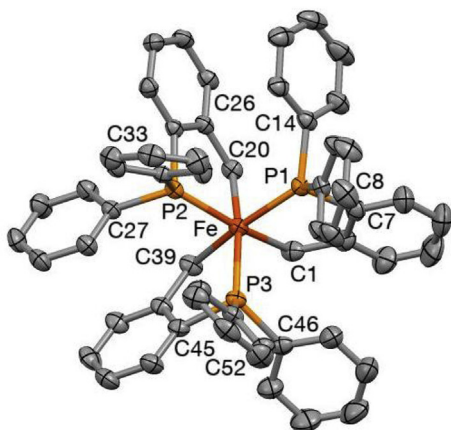
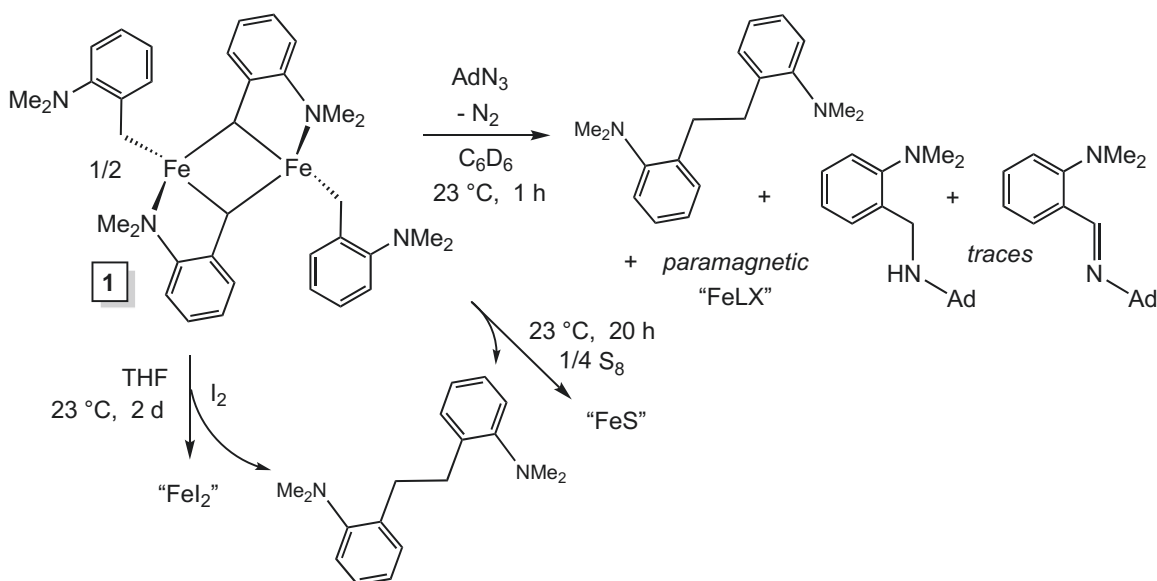


Fig. 3. Molecular view of the anion of $[fac\text{-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-}o\text{-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})_2]$ (**2**). Selected interatomic distances (Å) and angles ($^\circ$): Fe–C1, 2.1028(18); Fe–C20, 2.0976(18); Fe–C39, 2.1160(18); Fe–P1, 2.2170(5); Fe–P2, 2.2278(5); Fe–P3, 2.2198(5); $\text{PC}_{\text{ipso}}(\text{ave})$, 1.854(16); C1–Fe–C20, 82.84(7); C1–Fe–C39, 83.65(8); C20–Fe–C39, 85.13(7); P1–Fe–P2, 102.391(19); P1–Fe–P3, 106.74(2); P2–Fe–P3, 101.81(2); C1–Fe–P1, 82.34(5); C1–Fe–P2, 163.59(6); C1–Fe–P3, 91.64(6); C20–Fe–P1, 87.22(5); C20–Fe–P2, 81.72(5); C20–Fe–P3, 164.24(5); C39–Fe–P1, 164.77(6); C39–Fe–P2, 89.53(6); C39–Fe–P3, 79.58(5).



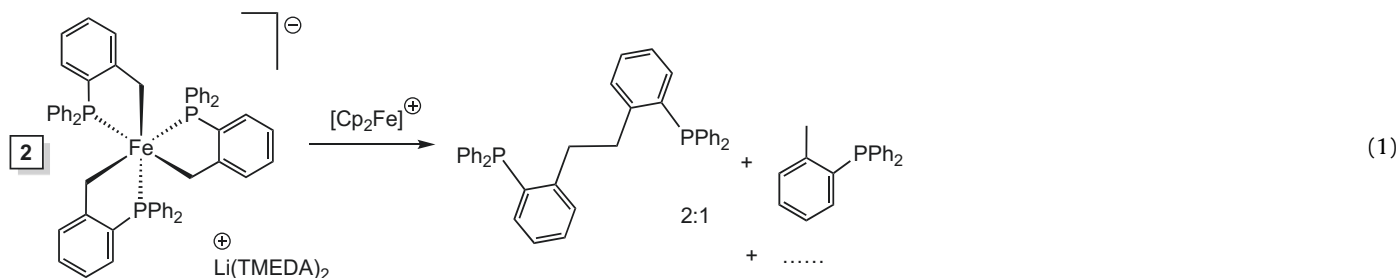
Scheme 2. Oxidative degradations of $[\text{Fe}(\text{o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2](\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{,N-}o\text{-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2$ (**1**) revealing nitrene insertion and C–C coupling products.

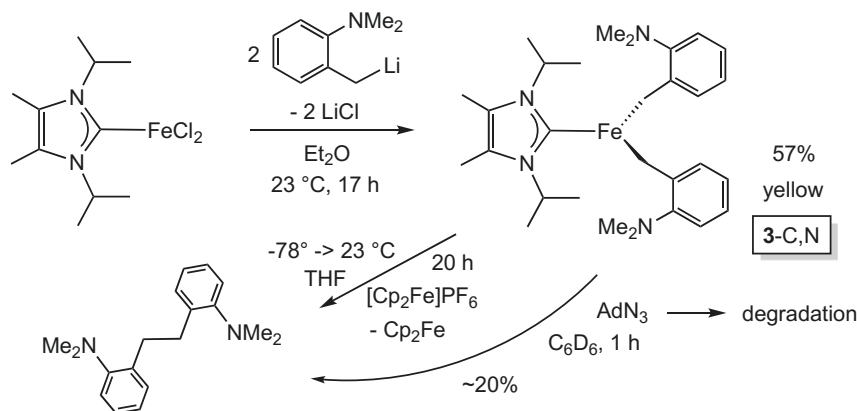
caption. The set of bond lengths appears to reflect the anionic character of the ferrous center, as the iron–carbon (benzyl) bonds average a rather lengthy 2.106(10) Å, while the $d(\text{Fe-P})$ average 2.222(6) Å, a value that is normal [5–7]. Chelate bite angles

averaging $81.2(14)^\circ$ are significantly smaller than the corresponding interchelate C–Fe–P angles of $89.5(22)^\circ$ (ave), and C–Fe–C angles that average $83.8(12)^\circ$ are considerable less than the interphosphine P–Fe–P angles of $103.6(27)^\circ$ (ave), presumably due to steric interactions. *Trans*-C–Fe–P angles of $164.2(6)^\circ$ show that the deviation from ideal pseudo-octahedral symmetry is moderate.

2.1.5. Oxidations of *o*-phenyl derived chelate derivatives

As a means of generating $\text{Fe}=\text{CHX}$ components within a chelate, sequential oxidations of $\text{Fe}(\text{II})$ followed by deprotonation were considered as a route. In a series of NMR tube scale reactions in C_6D_6 or $\text{THF-}d_8$ and small pot reactions, $[\text{Fe}(\text{o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2](\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{,N-}o\text{-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2$ (**1**) was subjected to a variety of oxidants with disappointing results, as Scheme 2 illustrates. While it was expected that $\text{Fe}(\text{III})$ intermediates would be isolable, this proved to be unfounded, as treatment of **1** with stoichiometric oxidants generally afforded *o*- $\text{NMe}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2$, an oxidatively coupled product derived from the chelate. Trace amine- and imine-products, presumably derived from adamantyl nitrene insertion into the iron–benzyl bonds, are also observed in the oxidation of **1** by AdN_3 . The metal products were not determined in these reactions. A corresponding oxidation of $[fac\text{-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-}o\text{-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})]$ (**2**) with $[\text{Cp}_2\text{Fe}]\text{PF}_6$ afforded the related coupled product, *o*- $\text{PPh}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PPh}_2$ (eq (1)). At this point, these chelates were abandoned as potential $\text{Fe}(\text{IV})$ alkylidene precursors in favor of mixed ligand species.





Scheme 3. Synthesis of $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{Fe}(\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2)_2$ (**3-C,N**) and C-C coupling upon oxidation.

2.2. Chelate derivatives supported by ancillary ligands

2.2.1. Synthesis and reactivity of $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{Fe}(\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2)_2$ (**3**)

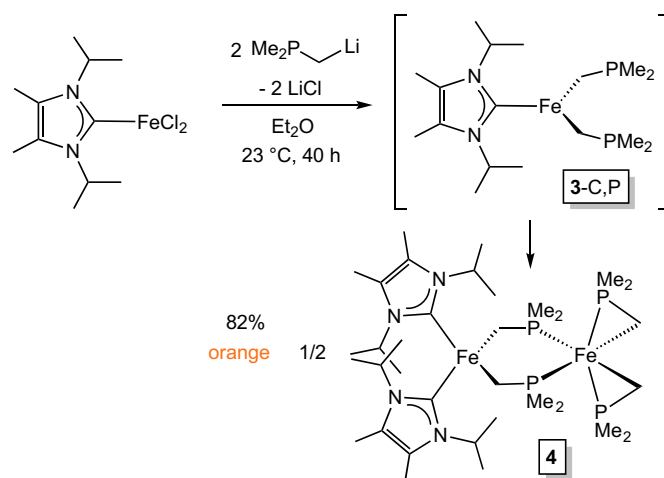
Since the aforementioned chelates were not found to support higher oxidation states, chelates in combination with ancillary ligands were utilized. The N-heterocyclic carbene precursor, $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{FeCl}_2$ [17,18], whose aggregation state is unknown, was generated via stoichiometric mixing of Me_2IPr and FeCl_2 in THF and used without isolation or further purification. As Scheme 3 indicates, addition of 2 equiv $\text{Li}(\text{o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)$ to $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{FeCl}_2$ provided yellow microcrystalline $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{Fe}(\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2)_2$ (**3-C,N**) in 57% yield. Evans' method measurements [10] indicated a high spin environment ($\mu_{\text{eff}} = 5.2 \mu_{\text{B}}$), consistent with a low coordinate $S = 2$ ferrous center [11]. Amine coordination leading to 4- or 5-coordinate species cannot be ruled out, although precedent [18,19] suggests that the complex is 3-coordinate, given the weak donor capacity of the amine. A one-electron oxidation attempt with ferricinium, and a two-electron oxidation attempt with adamantyl azide, each generated the coupled degradation product, $\text{o-NMe}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_4\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2$.

2.2.2. Synthesis $[(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})_2\text{Fe}](\mu\text{-}\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2[\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2]$ (**4**)

A switch to β -phosphine alkyls was considered, as these ligands had some intriguing possibilities as mono- and bidentate ligands [20,21]. Deprotonation of Me_3P is readily effected to produce $\text{LiCH}_2\text{PMe}_2$ [22], and exposure of $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{FeCl}_2$, with 2 equiv of the reagent produced an orange, microcrystalline product. Evans' method measurements [10] were lower than anticipated for $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2$ (**3-C,P**), prompting an X-ray structural analysis of the complex. If **3-C,P** was initially generated, a ligand redistribution occurred to give the final product, the binuclear complex $[(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})_2\text{Fe}](\mu\text{-}\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2[\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2]$ (**4**), as shown in Scheme 4. The μ_{eff} of $5.0(3) \mu_{\text{B}}$ is consistent with a single high spin iron(II) center ($\mu_{\text{SO}} = 4.9 \mu_{\text{B}}$) [11]. Oxidation studies were not pursued, given the structural findings, but redistribution suggested a phosphine derivative would possibly be intriguing.

2.2.3. Structure of $[(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})_2\text{Fe}](\mu\text{-}\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2[\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2]$ (**4**)

A molecular view of the binuclear complex $[(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})_2\text{Fe}](\mu\text{-}\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2[\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2]$ (**4**) is given in Fig. 4, and critical metric parameters are provided in its caption. The four-coordinate component is a fairly regular tetrahedron, with core angles averaging $109.6(52)$, and bond distances ($d(\text{FeC(P)}) = 2.113(2) \text{ \AA}$ (ave), $d(\text{FeC(NN)}) = 2.169(6) \text{ \AA}$ (ave)) consistent with



Scheme 4. Attempted synthesis of $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2$ (**3-C,P**), and the isolated redistribution product, $[(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})_2\text{Fe}](\mu\text{-}\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2[\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2]$ (**4**).

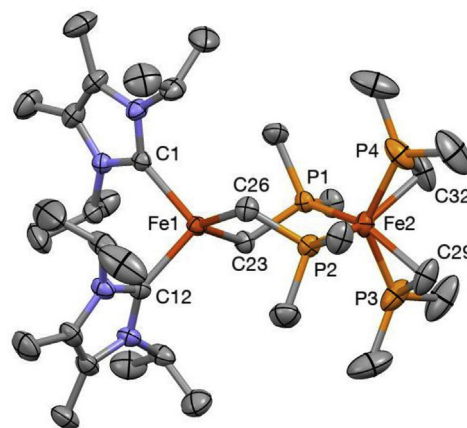
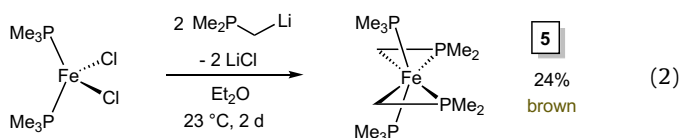


Fig. 4. Molecular view of $[(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})_2\text{Fe}](\mu\text{-}\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2[\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2]$ (**4**). Selected interatomic distances (Å) and angles ($^\circ$): Fe1-C1, 2.173(2); Fe1-C12, 2.165(2); Fe1-C23, 2.114(2); Fe1-C26, 2.111(2); Fe2-P1, 2.1842(6); Fe2-P2, 2.1917(6); Fe2-P3, 2.1055(7); Fe2-P4, 2.1090(7); Fe2-C29, 2.111(2); Fe2-C32, 2.117(2); C29-P3, 1.739(3); C32-P4, 1.738(3); C23-P1, 1.804(2); C26-P2, 1.805(2); C1-Fe1-C12, 99.67(7); C1-Fe1-C23, 109.33(8); C1-Fe1-C26, 113.24(8); C12-Fe1-C23, 112.67(8); C12-Fe1-C26, 113.24(8); C23-Fe1-C26, 109.24(8); P1-Fe2-P2, 97.59(2); P1-Fe2-P3, 100.92(3); P1-Fe2-P4, 108.75(3); P2-Fe2-P3, 108.39(3); P2-Fe2-P4, 101.32(3); P3-Fe2-P4, 134.32(3); C29-Fe2-P3, 48.72(8); C29-Fe2-P1, 149.62(8); C29-Fe2-P2, 94.46(8); C29-Fe2-P4, 95.97(9); C32-Fe2-P1, 93.35(8); C32-Fe2-P2, 149.88(8); C32-Fe2-P3, 96.86(9); Fe2-C29-P3, 65.48(8); Fe2-P3-C29, 65.80(9); Fe2-C32-P4, 65.48(8); Fe2-P4-C32, 65.97(9).

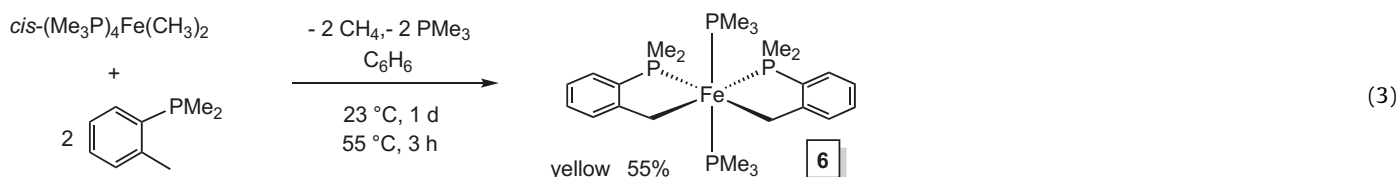
a high spin ferrous center. The six-coordinate ferrous center is highly irregular, and is actually close to being tetrahedral if each η^2 -CH₂PMe₂ ligand is considered as a unit. The CH₂ groups are 149.67(8)° and 148.88(8)° from the phosphorus atoms in the bridging μ - κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂ ligands. The phosphines almost comprise another tetrahedron, with only the P3-Fe2-P4 angle of 134.32(3)° significantly larger than the 103.4(49)° average of the remaining five P-Fe-P angles. The d(Fe2-C) of 2.114(4) Å (ave) are somewhat long (~0.15 Å) for a low spin Fe(II) center [5–7], but in combination with the phosphines, render the pseudo-octahedral center diamagnetic. It is interesting that the iron carbon distances of the bridging alkyl are essentially identical to those of the η^2 -CH₂PMe₂ ligand.

2.2.4. Synthesis and reactivity of (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (5)

The addition of 2 equiv LiCH₂PMe₂ to (Me₃P)₂FeCl₂ [23] led to the isolation, in 24% yield, of a sticky brown diamagnetic material formulated as (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (5), as indicated in eq (2). Its ¹H NMR spectrum was consistent with a structure containing a mirror plane, and its two ³¹P resonances were indicative of bound PMe₃, and bidentate κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂ ligands. In addition, 5 has essentially the same coordination environment as the six-coordinate portion of [(Me₂IPr)₂Fe](μ - κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂[Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂] (4), hence the μ_{eff} for 4 is probably indicative of a high spin tetrahedral center and a low spin (*S* = 0) pseudo-octahedral ferrous site.



The stability of the pseudo-octahedral (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (5) was significantly greater than the previously assessed lower coordinate species. Upon exposure to AdN₃ for prolonged periods, 5 was stable, and thermolysis of the reaction mixture up to 90 °C led only to azide degradation, but no reaction. Related thermolyses in the presence of *cis*-2-pentene gave no indication that decomposition products, such as alkylidenes resulting from α -PMe₂ migration, might mediate olefin metathesis.



2.2.5. Synthesis and reactivity of *cis,trans*-(PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂C₆H₄-o-PMe₂)₂ (6)

Instead of using salt metathesis to install the κ -C,P-CH₂C₆H₄-o-PMe₂ ligand akin to Scheme 1, a C-H bond activation methodology was employed. Kharsch's *cis*-(Me₃P)₄FeMe₂ complex [24] is known to react with activated CH bonds to expel methane [25–28], so it was treated with *o*-CH₃-C₆H₄PMe₂ for 1 day at 23 °C, then heated at 55 °C for 3 h to produce yellow *trans,cis*-(PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂C₆H₄-o-PMe₂)₂ (6) in 55% yield, as shown in eq (3). The switch from PPh₂ to PMe₂ should induce a stronger field at iron, and compound 6 is

diamagnetic as expected. Unfortunately, attempts to oxidize 6 failed to elicit stable compounds. For example, treatment of 6 with [Cp₂Fe][PF₆] afforded the C-C coupled oxidation product *o*-PMe₂-C₆H₄CH₂CH₂C₆H₄-o-PMe₂ and Cp₂Fe, and no tractable metal-containing species was evident.

3. Discussion

3.1. Chelate complexes of Iron(II)

A variety of C,X-chelate complexes of iron(II) have been prepared, mostly through metathetical reactions involving lithium anions and ferrous chloride or its derivatives. In general, this was a satisfactory approach aside from (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (5), and in this case the high solubility of the complex, and its oily/waxy consistency were the probable cause of the low yield (~24%). The phosphine-carbon based chelates enforce a low spin environment because of their significant field strength, and [*fac*-Fe(κ -C,P-o-CH₂C₆H₄PPh₂)₃][Li(TMEDA)₂] (2), the pseudo-octahedral “half” of [(Me₂IPr)₂Fe](μ - κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂[Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂] (4), (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (5), and *trans,cis*-(PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂C₆H₄-o-PMe₂)₂ (6) are all diamagnetic as a consequence. As a corollary, the field strength of the C,N-chelates is relatively weak, and [Fe(o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂](κ - μ -CH₂,N-o-CH₂C₆H₄NMe₂)₂ (1), and (Me₂IPr)Fe(CH₂C₆H₄-o-NMe₂)₂ (4-C,N) are all high spin.

3.2. Oxidative degradation of Iron(II)

The sequential oxidation of iron(II) chelates and deprotonation of the chelate Fe-CH₂- connection was considered as a means to generate Fe=CHX functionality, but none of the compounds survive either 1e[−] oxidants (i.e., [Cp₂Fe][PF₆]) or chemical agents that serve as 2e[−] oxidants, here typically represented by AdN₃. The products of these reactions were mostly C-C coupled species derived from the carbon arms of the chelates. While related chelates have been able to accommodate these oxidations [5–7,25,26], at least to Fe(III) and to configurations that appear Fe(IV) but are more realistically Fe(II) (Fig. 1), these species did not show this capability, although (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (5) was remarkably stable and resistant to oxidation. One rationalization is that the Fe-CH₂X fragments constructed all had electron-withdrawing groups as X, and none of the chelates were able to stabilize a less electron-rich center than Fe(II).

These laboratories recently conceptualized Charge Distribution Via Reporters (CDVR) [8], a means of numerically assessing the distribution of electron density. In this methodology, the charge on iron is fixed at *c*_{Fe} = +2.0, and the charge on each CH₂ groups is likely to be *c*_R ≤ −0.65. As a consequence, the phosphines in (PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂PMe₂)₂ (5), and *trans,cis*-(PMe₃)₂Fe(κ -C,P-CH₂C₆H₄-o-PMe₂)₂ (6) (for example), compensate the charge on iron with ~ −0.7 units of charge in the Fe(II) species. When oxidized by one electron, all the ligands must be able to accommodate the increase in charge by summing to −1.0 charge units.

Trialkylphosphines are flexible to $\sim +0.10$, but the aryl-phosphines in this study are considerably more electron-withdrawing, and the putative Fe(III) species are at best on the cusp of stability. Carbon-carbon bond formation via reductive elimination, and redistribution of product iron species appear to be the natural consequence.

4. Conclusions

A series of C,X-chelate complexes of iron have been prepared, containing amines ($X = \text{NMe}_2$) and phosphines ($X = \text{PMe}_2$, PPh_2) but neither the weak field amine or strong field phosphine derivatives have proven to be stable with respect to oxidation. As a consequence, less electron-withdrawing alkyls and ancillary ligands are now being considered.

5. Experimental

5.1. General considerations

All manipulations were performed using either glovebox or high vacuum line techniques under inert atmosphere (Ar), unless stated otherwise. All glassware was oven dried at 180°C . THF and ether were distilled under nitrogen from purple sodium benzophenone ketyl and vacuum transferred from the same prior to use. Hydrocarbon solvents were treated in the same manner with the addition of 1–2 mL/L tetraglyme. Tetramethylethylenediamine (tmeda) was stirred over sodium/benzophenone, then vacuum transferred to a fresh flask containing charged with sodium and benzophenone. Benzene- d_6 was dried over sodium, vacuum transferred and stored over sodium. THF- d_8 was dried over sodium, and vacuum transferred from sodium benzophenone ketyl prior to use. Chloroform- d_1 (Cambridge Isotope Laboratories) was used as received. $\text{LiCH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2$ [9,29], $\text{LiCH}_2\text{PMe}_2$ [22], 1,3-diisopropyl-4,5-dimethyl-1H-imidazol-3-ium-2-ide (Me_2IPr) [17], $\text{CH}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PPh}_2$ [16], $\text{FeCl}_2(\text{PMe}_3)_2$ [23], and $\text{cis-Me}_2\text{Fe}(\text{PMe}_3)_4$ [24] were prepared according to literature procedures. $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{FeCl}_2$ [18] was prepared by stirring FeCl_2 with 1 eq. Me_2IPr in THF for 1 h (until solids dissolve completely) at 23°C , followed by evaporation of the solvent under vacuum. Organic products were determined by NMR spectral analysis and Mass spectrometry (DART). All other chemicals were commercially available and used as received.

NMR spectra were obtained using Inova 400 MHz, 500 MHz and 600 MHz spectrometers. Chemical shifts are reported relative to benzene- d_6 (^1H δ 7.16; $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ δ 128.39), THF- d_8 (^1H δ 3.58; $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ δ 67.57) and chloroform- d_1 (^1H δ 7.26; $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ δ 77.16). Accurate mass data were acquired on an Exactive Orbitrap mass spectrometer (Thermo Scientific) using a DART (IonSense Inc., Saugus, MA) ion source in positive ion mode using helium for DART ionization, while software affiliated with the spectrometer was used to calculate the molecular weight. Solution magnetic measurements were conducted via Evans' method in C_6D_6 or THF- d_8 [10]. Analytical data were obtained from the CENTC Elemental Analysis Facility at the University of Rochester, funded by NSF CHE-0650456.

5.2. Procedures

5.2.1. $\text{Li}(\text{tmeda})\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PPh}_2$

This procedure is in accordance with César *et al.* [16]. Addition of $^n\text{BuLi}$ in hexanes (10.4 mmol, 1.60 M) to a 100-mL flask charged with $\text{CH}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PPh}_2$ (2.40 g, 8.69 mmol), 30 mL ether, 3 mL pentane and 1.60 mL TMEDA resulted in precipitation of orange microcrystals, and the mixture was stirred at 23°C for 18 h. Filtration of the precipitate yielded the title compound as orange crystals (2.757 g, 80%). ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ 1.66 (4H, s), 1.83 (12H, s), 6.23 (1H, t, 7 Hz), 6.77 (1H, t, 7 Hz), 7.03 (1H, m), 7.11 (3H, m), 7.18

(4H, m), 7.60 (4H, t, 7 Hz). ^{13}C NMR (C_6D_6): δ 45.10, 56.26, 107.84, 120.28, 128.51, 128.55, 128.63, 129.36, 133.34, 134.66, 134.86, 137.25, 168.69. ^{31}P NMR (C_6D_6): δ -15.52 (s).

5.2.2. $\text{CH}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PMe}_2$

This procedure is a modification of the Wright *et al.* procedure [30]. A 3-neck 100-mL flask was fit with a glass stopper, a solid addition glass finger charged with ZnCl_2 (1.912 g, 14.03 mmol), and a 180° Schlenk adapter. The glassware was degassed, and 16 mL THF was added via vacuum transfer to the flask. *o*-Bromotoluene (2.000 g, 11.69 mmol) was added to the flask, which was then cooled to -78°C . Addition of $^n\text{BuLi}$ in hexanes (12.8 mmol, 1.60 M) resulted in a cloudy suspension, which was stirred for 15 min at -78°C . An additional 16 mL THF was added via vacuum transfer, the ZnCl_2 solid was added to the suspension at -78°C , and the mixture was stirred for 2 h PCl_3 (1.2 mL, 14 mmol) was added via vacuum transfer, and the mixture was allowed to warm slowly to 23°C with stirring over 18 h. The solution was cooled to 0°C and the volatiles removed *in vacuo*, yielding a colorless oil. 30 mL ether was transferred under vacuum to the flask. With the flask cooled to -78°C , 32.2 mL of MeLi in ether (51.5 mmol, 1.60 M) was added, and the mixture became translucent yellow with a colorless precipitate. The mixture was allowed to warm slowly over 20 h. The flask was cooled with to 0°C , and 30 mL ice cold water was slowly added to the flask, generating small amounts of gas evolution until no effervescence was observed. The flask was removed from the adapter, the mixture added to a 250-mL Erlenmeyer flask and diluted with 50 mL ether. The mixture was filtered, and the organic layer was separated from the aqueous layer. The aqueous layer was extracted with 2×25 mL portions of ether, the combined organic extracts dried over MgSO_4 and filtered. Removal of the solvent *in vacuo* at 0°C yielded a yellow oil (1.421 g, 79%), which was stored under a nitrogen in a glovebox. Its purity was estimated at $\sim 93\%$ based on its ^{31}P NMR spectrum. ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ 1.03 (6H, d, 4 Hz), 2.48 (3H, s), 7.01 (1H, m), 7.09 (2H, m), 7.24 (1H, m). ^{13}C NMR (C_6D_6): δ 13.57 (d, 14 Hz), 20.04 (d, 23 Hz), 126.38, 128.36, 128.60 (d, 1 Hz), 130.26 (d, 4 Hz), 168.68. ^{31}P NMR (C_6D_6): δ -58.05.

5.2.3. $[\text{Fe}(\text{o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)]_2(\kappa\text{-}\mu\text{-CH}_2\text{N-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{NMe}_2)_2$ (**1**)

a. To a 50-mL flask charged with FeCl_2 (225 mg, 1.78 mmol) and $\text{LiCH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2$ (500 mg, 3.54 mmol) was added 25 mL THF via vacuum transfer at -78°C , resulting in a dark-orange solution. The solution was allowed to warm slowly with stirring for 18 h. The volatiles were removed, and the residue was taken up in 15 mL THF and filtered through dried Celite. Removal of the solvent *in vacuo* followed by washing the residue with hexanes (3×15 mL) resulted in brown-orange microcrystals (380 mg, 66%), with a purity of $\sim 94\%$ based on NMR spectroscopy. b. To a 25-mL flask charged with FeCl_3 (115 mg, 0.709 mmol) and $\text{LiCH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2$ (300 mg, 2.13 mmol) was added 10 mL ether via vacuum transfer at -78°C . The light orange suspension was allowed to warm slowly with stirring for 2 d, resulting in a dark red-orange solution at 21°C . Evaporation of the volatiles, and washing the residue with pentane (3×10 mL) resulted in brown microcrystals of **1**. Crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction were obtained via slow evaporation of a concentrated ether solution. ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ -18.41 (4H), 2.61 (4H), 17.53 (4H), 18.44 (4H), 89.07 (12H). μ_{eff} (Evans) = 8.5 μ_B .

5.2.4. $[\text{fac-Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-o-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{PPh}_2)_3][\text{Li}(\text{TMEDA})]$ (**2**)

To a 25-mL flask charged with FeCl_2 (43 mg, 0.34 mmol) and $\text{Li}(\text{tmeda})\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PPh}_2$ (400 mg, 1.00 mmol) was added 15 mL THF via vacuum transfer at -78°C . The yellow suspension was allowed to warm slowly to 23°C and stirred for 2 d, during which time the solution turned a dark-red. The volatiles were removed, and the residue taken up in 10 mL THF and filtered through dried

Celite. The THF was removed, and the residue was washed with hexanes (3×10 mL), and the red suspension filtered in hexanes to afford a red powder (275 mg, 73%). Crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction were obtained via letting a concentrated C_6D_6 solution stand for 12 h at 23 °C. ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ 1.41 (4H, br s), 1.64–1.70 (24H, br “s”), 2.42 (1H, s), 3.44 (1H, s), 3.55 (4H, br s), 6.76 (2H, br s), 6.79–6.94 (14H, m), 7.00 (4H, m), 7.03–7.05 (10H, m), 7.06 (1H, t, 7 Hz), 7.10 (1H, dd, 4.7 and 4 Hz), 7.14 (1H, br s), 7.23–7.29 (3H, m), 7.37 (5H, m), 7.94 (4H, m). ^{31}P NMR (C_6D_6): δ –13.37 (1P), –15.71 (2P).

5.2.5. $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{Fe}(\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2)_2$ (**3-C,N**)

To a 25-mL flask charged with $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{FeCl}_2$ (218 mg, 0.710 mmol) and $\text{LiCH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-NMe}_2$ (200 mg, 1.42 mmol) was added 10 mL ether via vacuum transfer at –78 °C. The yellow suspension did not change color, and was allowed to slowly warm with stirring for 17 h. At 23 °C, the solution turned brown-orange with colorless precipitate, and was filtered. The ether solution was concentrated and cooled to –78 °C for 15 min. The solution was filtered, and concentrated to afford yellow microcrystals (202 mg, 57%), whose purity was assessed at ~97% based on NMR spectroscopy. ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ –27.95 (2H), –13.69 (2H), –9.21 (6H), 16.14 (12H), 25.57 (2H), 38.88 (2H), 40.45 (12H). μ_{eff} (Evans) = 5.2 μ_{B} . Anal. for $\text{C}_{29}\text{H}_{44}\text{FeN}_4$ (calc.) C 69.04, H 8.79, N 11.10; (found) C 68.98, H 8.81, N 11.01.

5.2.6. $[(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})_2\text{Fe}][\mu\text{-}\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2]_2[\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2]$ (**4**)

To a 25 mL flask charged with $(\text{Me}_2\text{IPr})\text{FeCl}_2$ (277 mg, 0.902 mmol) and $\text{LiCH}_2\text{PMe}_2$ (148 mg, 1.80 mmol) was added via vacuum transfer 15 mL ether at –78 °C, resulting in an orange solution. The solution was allowed to warm slowly with stirring for 40 h. The volatiles were removed, and the orange residue taken up in 10 mL THF and filtered through dried Celite. Removal of the solvent, followed with washing the residue with hexanes (3×10 mL), resulted in an orange powder (285 mg, 82%). Crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction were obtained via layering a concentrated THF solution of **4** with pentane (1:3) and letting the solution stand at 23 °C for 12 h. ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ 0.78 (2H), 2.31 (6H), 2.65 (6H), 5.42 (12H), 17.24 (6H), 27.15 (4H). μ_{eff} (Evans) = 5.0(3) μ_{B} .

5.2.7. $(\text{PMe}_3)_2\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{PMe}_2)_2$ (**5**)

To a 25-mL flask charged with $\text{FeCl}_2(\text{PMe}_3)_2$ (340 mg, 1.22 mmol) and $\text{LiCH}_2\text{PMe}_2$ (200 mg, 2.44 mmol) was added 15 mL ether via vacuum transfer at –78 °C, resulting in a dark-brown solution. The solution was allowed to slowly warm to 23 °C for 2 d. The brown solution was filtered and the volatiles removed, producing a dark-brown residue. Attempts at trying to crystallize the compound from hexanes failed, as no solid precipitate was observed, regardless of concentration or temperature. The volatiles were evaporated, and the sticky brown solid was harvested (107 mg, 24%). ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ –1.81 (2H, s), –0.48 (2H, s), 1.17 (18H, “t”, 3 Hz), 1.30 (6H, br s), 1.36 (6H, br s). ^{13}C NMR (C_6D_6): δ –6.98, 14.51, 16.66, 26.54. ^{31}P NMR (C_6D_6 , ^{31}P coupling constants determined through spin simulation program MesReNova): δ –19.58, 30.06 (AA' = 27 Hz; XX' = 24 Hz, AX = A'X' = 61 Hz). Anal. for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{34}\text{FeP}_4$ (calc.) C 40.24, H 9.57; (found) C 40.45, H 9.06.

5.2.8. *cis,trans*– $(\text{PMe}_3)_2\text{Fe}(\kappa\text{-C,P-CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PMe}_2)_2$ (**6**)

A 60 mL bomb reactor was charged with $\text{CH}_3\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{-o-PMe}_2$ (250 mg, 1.63 mmol) and 15 mL benzene. A separate vial was charged with *cis*– $\text{Me}_2\text{Fe}(\text{PMe}_3)_4$ (319 mg, 0.817 mmol) and 3 mL benzene, and the it was added to the bomb, resulting in an orange solution. The solution was stirred for 1 d at 23 °C, followed by heating to 55 °C for 3 h. The volatiles were removed, and the solid residue was taken up in pentane/benzene and transferred to a

separate 25 mL flask. The solvent was removed, and 10 mL pentane was added via vacuum transfer. The pentane mixture was cooled to –78 °C for 15 min, and filtered to afford a yellow powder (230 mg, 55%). ^1H NMR (C_6D_6): δ 0.87 (18H, d, 5 Hz), 1.40 (6H, t, 3 Hz), 1.43 (6H, t, 2 Hz), 2.00 (2H, m), 2.39 (2H, dq, 15, 7 Hz), 7.03 (2H, t, 7 Hz), 7.10 (2H, t, 7 Hz), 7.23 (2H, dt, 7, 3 Hz), 7.43 (2H, d, 7 Hz). ^{13}C NMR (C_6D_6): δ 17.30 (t, 10 Hz), 20.10, 23.84 (“t”, 8 Hz), 34.78 (t, 16 Hz), 123.18, 125.38, 128.59, 128.96 (t, 6 Hz), 145.40, 163.57 (t, 24 Hz). ^{31}P NMR (C_6D_6): δ 18.79 (t, 33 Hz), 53.50 (t, 33 Hz). Anal. for $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{42}\text{FeP}_4$ (calc.) C 56.48, H 8.30; (found) C 56.46, H 8.32.

5.3. NMR tube and small scale reactions

Flame-dried NMR tubes, sealed to 14/20 ground glass joints, were charged with metal reagent (typically ~10 mg, 10^{-2} mmol) and other solid substrates in the dry box, attached to needle valves, and moved to the vacuum line. The tubes were degassed, and after vacuum transfer of deuterated solvent, were flame sealed with a torch. In the case of small scale reactions, 10 mL or 25 mL flasks were loaded with reagents in the glovebox, and appended to needle valves. Solvents were added via vacuum transfer, and upon conclusion of the reaction, the volatiles were removed and the assembly transferred to the glovebox for analysis. Consult the text for particular reactions.

5.4. Single crystal X-Ray diffraction study

5.4.1. Crystal data for **1**

$\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{48}\text{N}_4\text{Fe}_2$, $M = 648.48$, monoclinic, $P2_1/c$, $a = 9.8560$ (7), $b = 14.5425$ (11), $c = 12.4977$ (9) Å, $\beta = 111.796$ (4)°, $V = 1663$ (9) Å³, $D = 1.295$ g/cm³, $T = 223$ (2) K, $\lambda = 0.71073$ Å, $Z = 2$, $R_{\text{int}} = 0.0357$, 16496 reflections, 3685 independent, $R_1(\text{all data}) = 0.0480$, $wR_2 = 0.0994$, GOF = 1.013, CCDC-1529975.

5.4.2. Crystal data for **2**

$\text{C}_{84}\text{H}_{95}\text{N}_4\text{LiP}_3\text{Fe}$, $M = 1316.33$, triclinic, $P-1$, $a = 13.2061$ (6), $b = 14.0219$ (6), $c = 20.7264$ (10) Å, $\alpha = 98.823$ (2)°, $\beta = 101.703$ (2)°, $\gamma = 93.670$ (2)°, $V = 3695.8$ (3) Å³, $D = 1.183$ g/cm³, $T = 223$ (2) K, $\lambda = 0.71073$ Å, $Z = 2$, $R_{\text{int}} = 0.0468$, 66905 reflections, 15088 independent, $R_1(\text{all data}) = 0.0623$, $wR_2 = 0.0988$, GOF = 1.025, CCDC-1529976.

5.4.3. Crystal data for **4**

$\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{72}\text{N}_4\text{P}_4\text{Fe}_2$, $M = 772.53$, monoclinic, $P2_1/n$, $a = 13.1748$ (6), $b = 24.7344$ (12), $c = 13.3583$ (7) Å, $\beta = 91.399$ (2)°, $V = 4351.8$ (4) Å³, $D = 1.179$ g/cm³, $T = 223$ (2) K, $\lambda = 0.71073$ Å, $Z = 4$, $R_{\text{int}} = 0.0346$, 39602 reflections, 8263 independent, $R_1(\text{all data}) = 0.0463$, $wR_2 = 0.0821$, GOF = 1.036, CCDC-1529977.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jorganchem.2017.04.001>.

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