

From Pincer to Paddlewheel: C–H and C–S Bond Activation at Bis(2-pyridylthio)methane by Palladium(II)

Partha Halder,¹ Daniel J. SantaLucia, Sungho V. Park,¹ and John F. Berry^{*1,2}

Department of Chemistry, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1101 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, United States

 Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: The bis(2-pyridylthio)methane (H₂L) pincer complex (**1**), containing a Pd–C bond, was obtained from the reaction of bis(2-pyridylthio)methane (H₂L) with palladium(II) acetate in toluene under reflux. When palladium(II) trifluoroacetate was used, H₂L reacted to generate the tetrakis(pyridine-2-thiol)palladium(II) complex (**2**). Complex **2** was converted to a heterobimetallic palladium(II)–iron(II) paddlewheel complex (**3**) upon treatment with iron(II) triflate in the presence of a base in acetonitrile at room temperature.

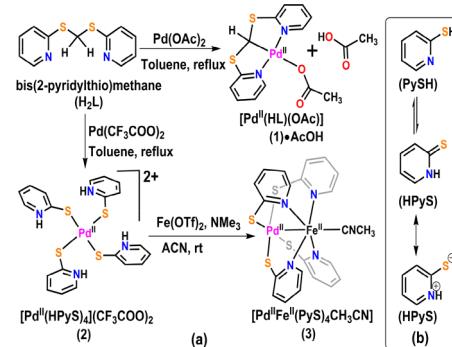
Palladium pincer complexes have contributed much to the development of organometallic catalysis.¹ Carbon-donor pincers generally involve N-heterocyclic carbenes or aromatic carbanions,^{1d–f} and examples of palladium pincer complexes featuring a donating sp³-hybridized carbon atom are limited.²

Toward the study of C(sp³)–H bond activation by palladium(II), we have synthesized and characterized a mononuclear palladium pincer complex of the bis(2-pyridylthio)methane (H₂L) ligand. This ligand has been shown to form mononuclear or polynuclear coordination complexes with a variety of metal ions.³ However, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first example of a direct M–C(sp³)-bonded pincer complex with this ligand. Furthermore, we were surprised to find that activation of the C(sp³)–S bond of the ligand provides tetrakis(pyridine-2-thiol)palladium(II) (**2**; CCDC 1860814), which acts as a precursor to the heterobimetallic paddlewheel complex Pd^{II}Fe^{II}(PyS)₄(CH₃CN) (**3**; CCDC 1860815), featuring a partial Pd^{II}–Fe^{II} metal–metal bond. Complexes that contain heterometallic metal–metal bonds are increasingly being employed as molecular magnets and sensing materials and for addressing important challenges in biology, energy, and catalysis.⁴ We report herein the use of H₂L as a precursor to either a pincer or a paddlewheel complex, depending on the Pd source used.

The reaction between Pd(OAc)₂ and H₂L (derived from pyridine-2-thiol, PySH) in toluene under reflux affords a brown complex, [Pd^{II}(HL)(OAc)]·AcOH (**1**·AcOH; CCDC 1860813), in 43% yield via C–H bond activation (Scheme 1a).

The electrospray ionization mass spectrometry (ESI-MS) spectrum of **1** in methanol shows signals at *m/z* 338.924 and 398.945 with the expected isotope distributions calculated for [Pd(HL)]⁺ and [Pd(HL)(OAc)]⁺, respectively (Figure S1). ¹H NMR spectroscopy in CDCl₃ shows that the complex is diamagnetic (Figure S2). The aliphatic proton signal shifts from

Scheme 1. (a) Syntheses of Mononuclear Palladium(II) and Heterobimetallic Palladium(II)–Iron(II) Complexes and (b) Tautomeric and Resonance Forms of PySH



5.06 to 6.20 ppm with respect to the free ligand, and this shift is large compared to the shifts observed for the pyridine protons. This large shift is due to formation of the Pd–C bond in **1**.

X-ray quality single crystals of **1**·AcOH were grown by slow diffusion of pentane into a toluene solution of the complex at 298 K under an inert atmosphere. The complex crystallizes in the monoclinic space group *C*2/c (Table S1). The crystal structure reveals a square-planar geometry of the palladium center bonded to the monoanionic NCN-donor ligand (HL[–]) and to a monodentate acetate ligand (Figure 1a). The anionic carbon (C6) and one acetate oxygen (O1) coordinate to the palladium center *trans* to each other with a Pd1–C6 distance of 1.986(4) Å. The Pd1–O1 bond [2.112(3) Å] is longer than expected (ca. 2.041 Å)⁵ because of the *trans* influence of the

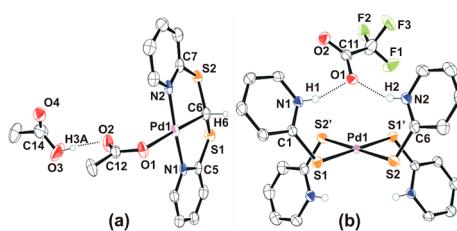


Figure 1. Thermal ellipsoid plots with ellipsoids drawn at the 50% probability level for (a) **1**·AcOH and (b) **2**. All hydrogen atoms are omitted except the acetic acid hydrogen atom and the ones bound to the pyridinium nitrogen atoms. Only one CF₃COO[–] anion is shown for **2**.

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carbanionic ligand^{2b} (Table S2). The other oxygen atom of the acetate ligand forms a strong hydrogen-bonding interaction with one molecule of acetic acid with a O3···O2 distance of 2.602(6) Å (Table S2). The coordinated acetate ion and noncoordinated acetic acid molecule exchange quickly on the NMR timescale at room temperature. Using variable-temperature ¹³C NMR spectroscopy, we find that the two separate acetate groups are distinguishable below -15°C (Figure S3). This result emphasizes the *trans* effect of the Pd–C(sp³) bond.

Interestingly, the reaction of H₂L with Pd(CF₃COO)₂ does not yield an analogue of **1** but instead gives the dark-orange complex [Pd^{II}(PySH)₄](CF₃COO)₂ (**2**) in 15% yield (Scheme 1a) and insoluble black residue. Oxidative C–S bond activation of H₂L has been shown to occur with anions of copper(II) salts, but this is the first example with palladium.^{3a} Umakoshi et al. have synthesized an analog of **2** with chloride counteranions in 77% yield by the reaction of [PdCl₂(CH₃CN)₂] and PySH at high temperatures in dioxane.⁶ Here, an alternate synthesis of **2** was carried out with PySH and palladium(II) trifluoroacetate in acetonitrile at room temperature, which gives **2** in 90% yield. The IR spectrum of **2** shows bands at around 1191–1130 cm⁻¹ attributable to $\nu(\text{C–F})$ stretches of the trifluoroacetate counteranion. Complex **2** has signals at *m/z* 274.98 and 662.95 in its ESI-MS spectrum, each consistent with the expected isotope distributions calculated for [Pd(PySH)₄]²⁺ and [Pd (PySH)₄(CF₃COO)]⁺, respectively (Figure S4). The diamagnetic complex **2** was further characterized by ¹H NMR spectroscopy in CD₃CN, which shows peaks between 8.18 and 7.21 ppm for the pyridine protons (Figure S5). The broad peak at 14.85 ppm is assigned to the NH protons.

The X-ray crystal structure of **2** reveals a four-coordinate square-planar geometry at the palladium center with HPyS ligands (Figure 1b). The Pd–S bond lengths vary in the range of 2.3326(7)–2.3269(7) Å, and C–S bond lengths vary strictly from 1.716(2) to 1.713(2) Å (Table S3). These lengths are comparable to those in palladium tetrathiolate complexes.^{6,7} The short Pd–S bond distances are indicative of monoanionic thiolates (instead of thiones)⁸ bound to the palladium(II) center like other metal–PySH complexes. Thus, the PySH ligands in **2** bind in a zwitterionic form, HPyS (bottom, Scheme 1b). All of the protonated pyridinium nitrogen atoms participate in strong hydrogen-bonding interactions with the trifluoroacetate counterions with N1···O1 and N2···O1 distances of 2.763(2) and 2.797(3) Å, respectively (Table S3).

The reaction of **2** and Fe(OTf)₂ in acetonitrile, followed by treatment with trimethylamine (Me₃N) at room temperature under an inert atmosphere yields an orange-red complex, **3** (Scheme 1a). This is an improvement from the conditions used by Kinoshita et al., who synthesized platinum-based heterobimetallic complexes with first-row transition metals and a PySH derivative at higher temperatures in sealed-tube reactions.⁹ Wagler and co-workers synthesized rhodium–antimony heterobimetallic paddlewheel complexes with this ligand, but these are insoluble in common organic solvents.¹⁰ The matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization MS (MALDI-MS) of **3** shows a signal at *m/z* 603.521 with the expected isotope distribution for [PdFe(PySH)₄]⁺ (Figure S6). The ¹H NMR spectrum of complex **3** in CD₃CN at room temperature shows sharp peaks for the pyridine protons with paramagnetic shifts (Figure S7) consistent with retention of the paddlewheel structure in solution and the presence of high-spin iron(II).¹¹

The structure of **3** reveals four sulfur atoms coordinated to the palladium center, with distances similar to those reported for **2**.

Four pyridine nitrogen atoms coordinate to the iron center upon deprotonation by Me₃N, forming the (4,0) isomer of the heterobimetallic palladium–iron complex **3** (Figure 2). The

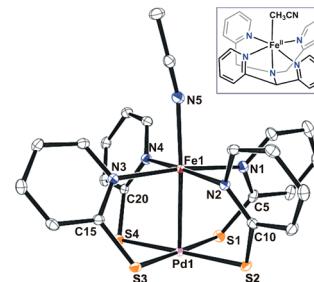


Figure 2. Thermal ellipsoid plots with ellipsoids drawn at the 50% probability level for **3**. All hydrogen atoms are omitted. The inset is the binding motif for the Fe^{II}-N4Py complex.

acetonitrile molecule and palladium center coordinate to the iron atom *trans* to each other, occupying the axial positions with a Pd1–Fe1–N5 angle of 176.66(6) $^{\circ}$, a short Fe1–Pd1 distance of 2.595(10) Å, and a Fe1–N5 distance of 2.180(2) Å (Table S4). The Pd–Fe bond distance is comparable to the Pd–Fe bond distances reported recently in Fe–Pd–Fe trimetallic molecules^{11b,12} and shorter than that of palladium ferrocenyl complexes, which have Pd–Fe distances ranging from 2.63 to >2.9 Å.¹³ The geometry about the iron center is reminiscent of the iron complex with the N4Py ligand (Figure 2, inset), although [(N4Py)Fe(NCCH₃)]²⁺ and its derivatives are all low-spin.¹⁴

The optical spectrum of the complex **1**·AcOH in acetonitrile under an inert atmosphere exhibits a shoulder at 390 nm ($\epsilon = 4300 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$) corresponding to a ligand-centered transition. Complex **2** shows an absorption peak at 483 nm ($\epsilon = 3600 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$), which may be assigned to a metal-to-ligand (palladium(II)-to-thiolate π^*) charge-transfer transition (MLCT; Figure 3). Similarly, complex **3** exhibits an absorption peak at 430 nm

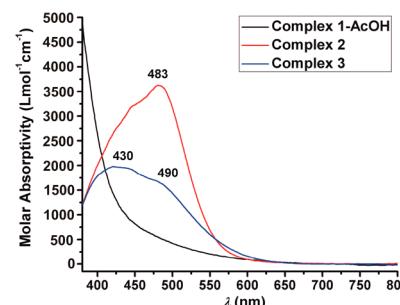


Figure 3. Optical spectra of complexes **1**·AcOH, **2**, and **3** (0.5 mM) in acetonitrile at room temperature under an inert atmosphere.

($\epsilon = 2000 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$) and a shoulder at 490 nm ($\epsilon = 1700 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$) corresponding to an iron(II)-to-pyridine π^* or a palladium(II)-to-thiolate π^* MLCT (Figure 3).

The cyclic voltammogram (CV) of **1**·AcOH shows irreversible oxidation peaks at $E = 0.89$ and 1.17 V versus ferrocene/ferrocenium (Fc/Fc⁺), which are assigned to [HLPd(OAc)]^{2+/3+} and [HLPd(OAc)]^{3+/4+}, respectively (Figure S8). The CV of **2** shows irreversible oxidations at 0.42 and 1.22 V, which may be assigned to oxidation at the palladium center for Pd^{II} \rightarrow Pd^{III} and Pd^{III} \rightarrow Pd^{IV}, respectively (Figure S9). Similarly, the CV of **3** has an irreversible oxidation at 0.08 V

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