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Pritam Mahawar, a Thayalan Rajeshkumar, b Thomas P. Spaniol, a Laurent Maron b and Jun Okuda 🕩 *a

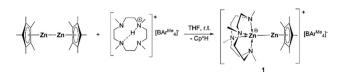
Hetero- and homoleptic dinuclear zinc(ı) complexes containing the macrocycle Me₄TACD (N,N',N",N"'-1,4,7,10-tetramethylcyclododecane) were prepared; the heteroleptic complex [(Me4TACD)Zn- $ZnCp^*]^+$ reacted with activated hydrocarbons R-H (R = CH₂CN, C≡CPh) to give the corresponding hydrocarbyl zinc(II) complexes [(Me₄TACD)ZnR]⁺.

The discovery of decamethyldizincocene Cp*Zn-ZnCp* (Cp* = n⁵-C₅Me₅) by Carmona et al. in 2004¹ has prompted the isolation of other complexes featuring the remarkable zinc(1)-zinc(1) σ -bond. On the one hand, neutral zinc(1) analogs containing a L_1X -type ligand (L = two-electron, X = one-electron ligand)^{2a} such as bulky aryl $(l = 0)^3$ and β-diketiminato $(l = 1)^4$ became known, on the other hand protonolysis or oxidation of Cp*Zn-ZnCp* allowed the synthesis of mono(cations) of the type $[((L_3)Zn-ZnCp^*)]^+$ (ref. 5) or dicationic complexes $[(L_3)Zn Zn(L_3)^{2+}(L = THF, DMAP).^6$ Regarding zinc as a main group element with filled 3d¹⁰ shell, ^{2b} the valence electron count of zinc in all these complexes does not exceed 8 electrons.^{2,7} Recently, we have reported that the heteroleptic zinc(1) cation [(TEEDA)(thf)Zn- $ZnCp^*$ ⁺[BAr₄^F] (TEEDA = N,N,N',N'-tetraethylethylenediamine; $Ar^{F} = 3.5 - ((CF_3)_2 C_6 H_3)$ can undergo a heterolytic dihydrogen cleavage.8 As recently suggested for the reactivity of diberyllocene,9 main group metal-metal bonds can be polarized, so for decamethyldizincocene a resonance structure $[Cp*Zn(II)]^+\leftarrow$ [Zn(0)Cp*] can be implied, accounting for some of the reactivity patterns (redox disproportionation) observed. 10 We wondered whether introducing hypervalency7 at the zinc(1) center (with

The versatile macrocyclic ligand Me₄TACD is capable of coordinating s-,13 and p-block14 metal cations including lowvalent triele cations Ga(I), In(I) and Tl(I). Thus, stoichiometric reaction of Cp*Zn-ZnCp* with the borate salt of the protonated $Me_4TACD [(Me_4TACD)H][BAr_4^{Me}]^{15} (BAr_4^{Me} = [B{3,5-(CH_3)_2-}]^{-1}$ C_6H_3 1 $^{-}$) in THF at room temperature for one hour afforded the heteroleptic zinc(I) monocation [(Me₄TACD)Zn-ZnCp*][BAr₄^{Me}] (1) in 90% yield with the elimination of one equivalent of Cp*H. Colorless compound 1 is stable under argon at room temperature and is soluble in THF, acetonitrile, and dichloromethane (Scheme 1).

Compound 1 was characterized in solution using multinuclear NMR spectroscopy, including 1H, 13C, and 11B, and in the solid state using single crystal X-ray diffraction. The ¹H NMR spectra indicate η⁵-Cp* coordination, displaying a characteristic single peak for all methyl groups of Cp* at δ 2.02 ppm and confirmed the ligand/borate ratio of 1:1. The diastereotopic CH₂CH₂ protons of the Me₄TACD ligand appear as multiplets of AA'BB' spin system in the range of δ 2.14-2.31 ppm, as commonly observed for the coordinated Me₄TACD ligand. 14 The 13C(1H) NMR spectrum revealed two signals for the Cp* methyl and ring carbons at δ 10.5 and δ 108.4 ppm, respectively, along with the peaks for the Me4TACD ligand and

^b CNRS, INSA, UPS, UMR 5215, LPCNO, Université de Toulouse, 135 Avenue de Rangueil, 31077 Toulouse, France. E-mail: laurent.maron@irsamc.ups-tlse.fr † Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available: Experimental, analytical (NMR, IR spectra, elemental analysis) and crystallographic data of 1-4. CCDC 2378377 (1), 2378378 (2), 2378379 (3) and 2378380 (4). For ESI and crystallographic data in CIF or other electronic format see DOI: https://doi.org/10.



Scheme 1 Synthesis of $[(Me_4TACD)Zn-ZnCp^*][BAr_4^{Me}]$ (1).

formal valence electron count higher than 8) would result in a higher reactivity of the zinc(I)-zinc(I) bond. Here we report on the preparation of both homo- and heteroleptic zinc(I) cations that contain the L₄-type macrocycle Me₄TACD (N,N',N'',N'''-1,4,7,10-1)tetramethylcyclododecane). 11 The heteroleptic zinc(1) cation was found to undergo a heterolytic C-H bond activation of acetonitrile and phenylacetylene. 10,12

^a Institute of Inorganic Chemistry, RWTH Aachen University, Landoltweg 1, 52056 Aachen, Germany. E-mail: jun.okuda@ac.rwth-aachen.de

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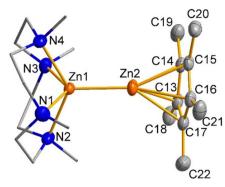
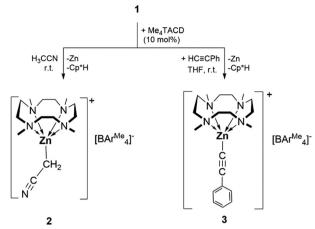


Fig. 1 Cationic part of the molecular structure of compound 1. Selected interatomic distances [Å] and angles [°]: Zn1-Zn2 2.3510(3), Zn1-N1 2.2388(17), Zn1-N2 2.2177(15), Zn1-N3 2.2550(15), Zn1-N4 2.2181(15), Zn1-C13 2.3484(18), Zn1-C14 2.3168(18), Zn1-C15 2.2779(17), Zn1-C16 2.2889(18), Zn1-C17 2.3275(18), N1-Zn1-N2 80.40(6), N1-Zn1-N3 130.33(6), N1-Zn1-N4 79.98(6), N1-Zn1-Zn2 115.79(4), N2-Zn1-Zn2 112.12(4), N3-Zn1-Zn2 113.83(4), N4-Zn1-Zn2 117.99(4).

borate counter-ion. Compound 1 crystallizes in the monoclinic space group $P2_1/n$ with one ion pair per asymmetric unit. The structure of the molecular cation is depicted in Fig. 1 (see ESI† for details). The cationic penta-coordinate zinc center is positioned above the N₄-basal plane of the Me₄TACD ligand with the Zn-N_(centroid) bond distance of 0.9416(6) Å, which is consistent with the Zn-N_(centroid) bond distance (0.9371(15) Å) in the zinc(II) hydride cation [(Me₄TACD)ZnH][HBPh₃]. 16 The zinczinc distance of 2.3510(3) Å is marginally longer than the reported value for heteroleptic Zn(1) monocations [(Et₂O)₃Zn- $ZnCp^*[BAr_4^F]$ (2.324(2) Å)⁵ and $[(TEEDA)Zn-ZnCp^*][BAr_4^F]$ (2.3253(15) Å).8 The enhanced polarization effect caused by the increased coordination number and asymmetrical ligand environment causes the zinc-zinc bond distance to be longer than in Cp*Zn-ZnCp* with 2.302(1) Å.¹

Compound 1 shows a slight slipping of the Cp* ring from η^5 coordination to Zn1, with the metal atom's projection displaced from the ring's centroid by 0.072 Å. The Zn1-Cp*_(centroid) distance (1.971 Å) lies within the range of the Zn1-Cp*(centroid) bond distances in heteroleptic zinc(1) complexes [(TEEDA)Zn- $ZnCp^*[BAr_4^F]$ (1.954 Å)⁸ and $[(HC\{C(Me)NDipp\}_2)Zn-ZnCp^*]$ (1.9215(3) Å).¹⁷ This slipped coordination results in the nonlinear alignment of the Zn2–Zn1–Cp* $_{(centroid)}$ bond angle of 164.75(1)° in 1.

Reactivity studies of zinc(1) complexes toward activated hydrocarbons are scarce, 10 although reactions with phenylacetylene have been studied. 10a-c While the zinc(1) cation 1 is kinetically robust in acetonitrile for at least 12 h, in the presence of 10 mol% of Me₄TACD, the formation of a grey precipitate was observed within 5 min and zinc(II) cyanomethanide [(Me₄TACD)Zn(CH₂CN)][BAr₄^{Me}] (2) was isolated from the supernatant in 85% yield (Scheme 2). Formation of 2 can be interpreted as a product of oxidative C-H bond addition across the Zn-Zn bond of 1, presumably also forming unstable [Cp*ZnH], 18 which is known to decompose via reductive elimination to form the observed byproducts Cp*H and metallic zinc. Compound 2 can also be synthesized in THF using 2



Scheme 2 Reaction of [Me₄TACDZn-ZnCp*][BAr₄^{Me}] (1) with activated hvdrocarbons

equivalents of acetonitrile in the presence of 10 mol% of Me₄TACD. Likewise, in the presence of 10 mol% of Me₄TACD, the reaction of compound 1 with phenylacetylene in THF at room temperature gave the zinc(II) acetylide complex $[(Me_4TACD)ZnC \equiv CPh][BAr_4^{Me}]$ (3) in 90% isolated yield (Scheme 2). The precise role of Me₄TACD is unclear, it may act as a Brønsted base in these reactions. Compounds 2 and 3 are soluble in THF, acetonitrile, and dichloromethane and are stable at room temperature under argon. Compounds 2 and 3 were characterized using multinuclear NMR spectroscopy (1H, 13C, 11B) in the solution state. The solid-state characterization was performed using single-crystal XRD and IR spectroscopy. In the ¹H and ¹³C{¹H} NMR spectra of compound 2 the characteristic peaks for the CH₂CN protons appear at δ 0.52 ppm and δ -14.3 ppm, respectively. For the acetylide compound 3 the ¹³C{¹H} NMR spectrum shows the characteristic peaks for the acetylenic carbon atoms at δ 109.0 and 107.8 ppm. All peaks of the Me₄TACD ligands in compounds 2 and 3 are downfield shifted compared to those of 1, due to the increase in oxidation number of zinc from +1 in compound 1 to +2 in compounds 2 and 3.

Single crystal X-ray diffraction studies revealed the monomeric structure of compounds 2 and 3 (see ESI†). The coordination of the Me₄TACD ligand at the cationic zinc(II) center in compounds 2 and 3 is comparatively stronger than in precursor 1 with zinc(1) cation which can be seen by the decrease in the Zn-N_(centroid) bond distance (0.8856(16) Å for 2 and 0.8776(9) Å for 3) from 0.9416(6) (for 1). The Zn-CH₂ bond distance in compound 2 of 2.025(3) Å is comparable to the Zn-CH₂ bond length in the pyrazolylborate- ([(Tp^{Ph,Me})Zn(CH₂CN)]; Tp^{Ph,Me} = hydrotris((5,3-methylphenyl-pyrazolyl)borate) 2.052(3) Å)^{19a} and PMDTA-supported zinc cyanomethanide and (PMDTA = N,N,N', N",N"-pentamethyldiethylenetriamine, 1.991(6) Å) reported. 19b The $C \equiv C$ bond length in 3 (1.207(3) Å) is longer than that in free phenylacetylene (1.183(2) Å) due to the donation of π -electron to zinc vacant orbitals. The Zn-C bond length in compound 3 (1.9519(17) Å) lies within the range observed for the monomeric [$\{(dipp)NacNac\}ZnC \equiv CPh\}$ (1.906(2) Å) ((dipp)NacNac =2-{(2,6-diisopropyl-phenyl)amino}-4-{(2,6-diisopropylphenyl)

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Scheme 3 Formation of [(Me₄TACD)Zn-Zn(Me₄TACD)][BAr₄^{Me}]₂ (4).

imino}pent-2-enyl).20 In the IR spectrum of compound 2 a stretching band at $\nu(CN) = 2193 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ indicates the presence of a terminal C≡N group.

In analogy to the synthesis of 1 through protonation of one of the Cp* ligands in Cp*Zn-ZnCp*, we attempted to protonate both Cp* ligands by reacting with 2 equivalents of the acid [(Me₄TACD)H][BAr₄^{Me}]. This only led to the formation of zinc(1) cation 1 along with unreacted acid. Recently, we reported that the zinc-zinc bond of zinc(1) cation [(TEEDA)Zn-ZnCp*][BAr₄F] can cleave dihydrogen in a heterolysis, similar to a frustrated Lewis acid-base type activation.8 When the reaction of compound 1 was carried out with a large excess (5 equivalents) of HBpin in acetonitrile at 60 °C for 3 days, the zinc(1)-zinc(1) dication [(Me₄TACD)Zn-Zn(Me₄TACD)][BAr₄^{Me}]₂ (4) was formed along with Cp*H, zinc metal, and B2pin2 (Scheme 3). Compound 4 was isolated in 30% yield (based on (Me₄TACD)Zn) and characterized in the solution state using multinuclear NMR spectroscopy and in the solid state using single crystal XRD studies.

In the ¹H NMR spectrum of compound 4, all the Me₄TACD protons (δ 2.33–2.51 ppm (CH₂) and δ 2.20 ppm (CH₃)) are deshielded compared to those in 1 (δ 2.14–2.31 ppm (CH₂) and δ 2.11 ppm (CH₃)) due to the increase in the cationic charge of the zinc centers. ¹³C NMR spectra show all the corresponding signals for the Me₄TACD ligand and borate counterion. Compound 4 crystallizes in the orthorhombic space group *Pbca* with one ion pair in the asymmetric unit. The dinuclear structure of 4 with a zinc(1)-zinc(1) distance of 2.4860(6) Å was confirmed using single crystal XRD diffraction (Fig. 2a). Due to the higher coordination number in 4, the zinc-zinc bond distance is significantly longer than the zinc-zinc bond in the reported dications of the type $[Zn_2(L_6)]^{2+}[Zn_2(dmap)_6][A \{OC(CF_3)_3\}_4\}_2 (2.419(2) \text{ Å})^{6a} \text{ and } [Zn_2(thf)_6][BAr_4^F]_2 (2.363(2) \text{ Å})^{.6b} \text{ As}$ can be seen from the space-filling model (Fig. 2b), the two 9-electron [Zn(Me₄TACD)]⁺ units are closely meshed and the two Me₄TACD ligands adopt a staggered conformation (Fig. 2c). Notably, both ligands show $\delta\delta\delta\delta$ or $\lambda\lambda\lambda\lambda$ conformation of the CH₂CH₂ units and the overall molecular symmetry of the homochiral dimer corresponds to the rare pointgroup D_4 .

To provide further insight into the bonding in compounds 1 and 4, DFT calculations were performed at the B3PW91 level of theory. Gas phase optimized structure agrees well with the experimentally determined structures of 1 and 4 from X-ray diffraction studies. The LUMO is mainly located on the Me₄TACD ligand in both compounds. The zinc-zinc bond in compound 1 constitutes the HOMO-2, while the HOMO is localized on Zn-Cp* bond. In contrast, the HOMO is mainly localized on the zinc-zinc bond in compound 4 (Fig. 3). This is consistent with the apparent longer zinc-zinc bond in

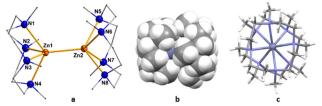


Fig. 2 (a) Left: Cationic part of the molecular structure of compound 4. The anion part [BAr₄^{Me}] and all H atoms are omitted for clarity. Displacement parameters are shown at 30% probability; selected interatomic distances [Å] and angles [°]: Zn1-N1 2.378(3), Zn1-N2 2.337(3), Zn1-N3 2.390(3), Zn1-N4 2.326(3), Zn1-Zn2 2.4860(6), Zn2-N5 2.480(3), Zn2-N6 2.291(3), Zn2-N7 2.463(3), Zn2-N8 2.278(3); N1-Zn1-N2 76.31(11), N1-Zn1-N3 120.82(11), N1-Zn1-N4 75.92(11), N1-Zn1-Zn2 120.99(8), N2-Zn1-Zn2 119.19(8), N3-Zn1- Zn2 118.18(8), N4-Zn1-Zn2 119.86(8). (b) Middle: Space filling model of 4. (c) Right: View of 4 along the Zn-Zn axis, highlighting the D_4 symmetry.

compound 4 (2.4860(6) Å) compared to 1 (2.3510(3) Å). Moreover, the presence of HOMO contribution in Zn-Cp* moiety goes in line with its reaction with the acidic proton of CH3CN and HC≡CPh for the formation of HZnCp*.

The mechanism for the formation of 4 remains obscure. It seems plausible that HBpin may act as a hydride transfer reagent to provide short-lived zinc hydride and boryl species as intermediates during the formation of 4 with elimination of Zn, Cp*H, and B₂Pin₂. We have previously reported somewhat unstable Zn(1) hydridoborate species [(TEEDA)Zn(HBPh3)-ZnCp*].16 The formation of zinc(II) hydrides from HBpin was reported by Ingleson et al. 21 However, the zinc(II) hydride cation $[(Me_4TACD)ZnH]^+$, previously isolated as $[(Me_4TACD)]$ ZnH][HBPh₃]¹⁶ is stable with respect to dehydrocoupling. Xu et al. reported that the dehydrocoupling of zinc(II) hydride with a tridentate L₂X-type ligand forms the zinc(1)-zinc(1) bonded complex, but the reaction requires the presence of catalytic [Ni(CO)₂(PPh₃)₂] or stoichiometric [Pd(PPh₃)₄].²² At this point, however, we cannot exclude other mechanistic pathways for the formation of 4, including radical intermediates. 22d,23

In conclusion, we have prepared hypervalent zinc(i) complexes that contain the L₄-type macrocycle Me₄TACD 1 and 4. While the heteroleptic complex 1 can be accessed by protonolysis of dizincocene Cp*Zn-ZnCp* using the conjugate acid of Me₄TACD, the homoleptic complex 4 was only obtained by the treatment of 1 with the hydride reagent HBpin in a somewhat complicated reaction. The reaction of 1 with activated hydrocarbons acetonitrile (p $K_a = 25$) and phenylacetylene (p $K_a = 29$) suggests that C-H bond cleavage by the dinuclear zinc(1)-zinc(1) complexes can occur by a polarized zinc(1)-zinc(1) bond, possibly

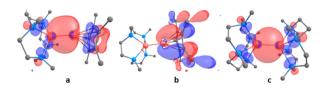


Fig. 3 (a) HOMO-2 for compound 1. (b) HOMO for compound 1. (c) HOMO for compound 4

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in the presence of a Brønsted base. While C-H bond activation has been reported for d-block transition metals, 24 zinc(1) complexes appear to show similar reactivity with relevance to C-H bond functionalization.10

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Data availability

The data supporting this article have been included as part of the ESI.†

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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