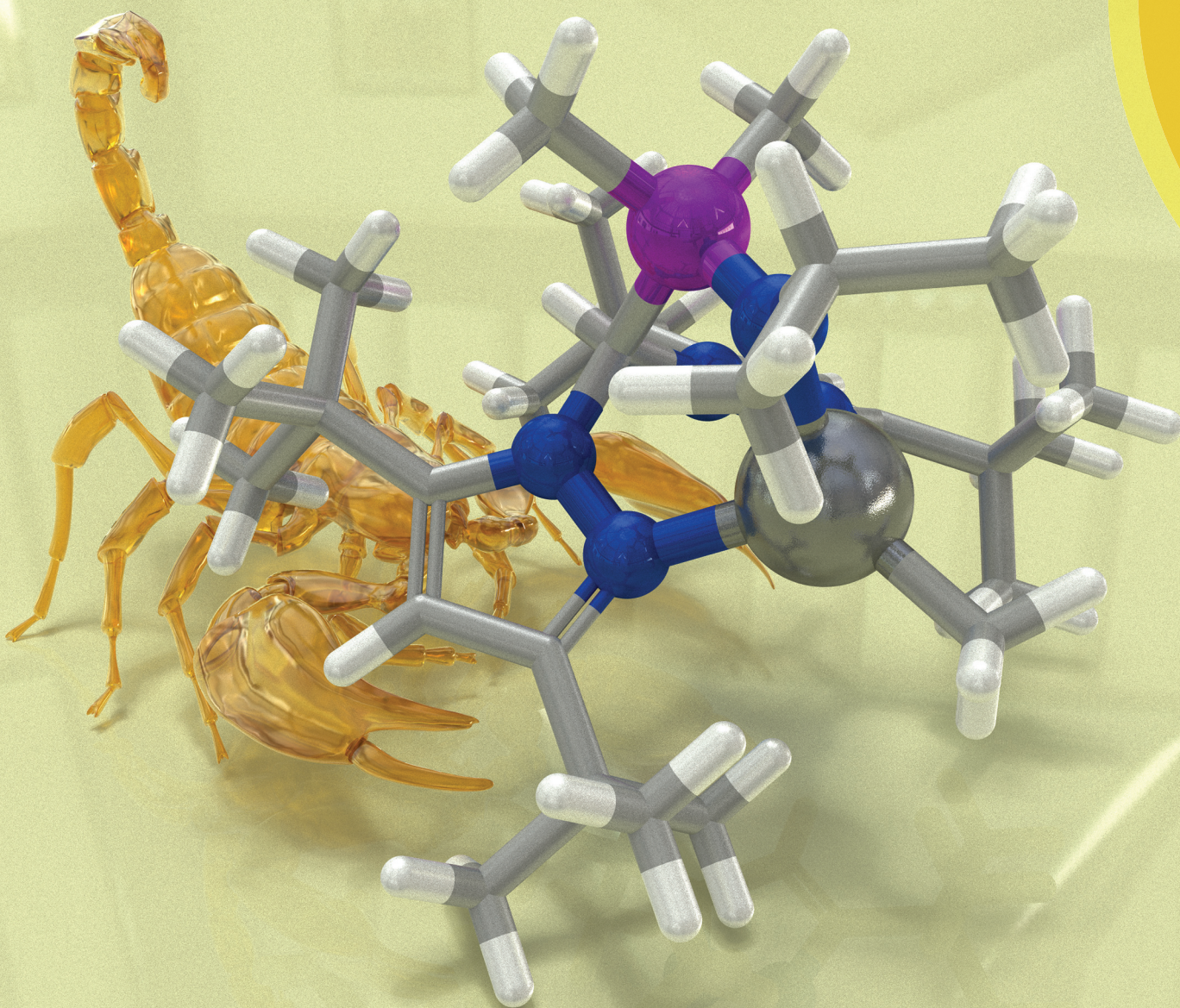


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Zoë R. Turner, Philip Mountford *et al.*
Magnesium, calcium and zinc [N₂N'] heteroscorpionate
complexes

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4124Magnesium, calcium and zinc [N₂N']
heteroscorpionate complexes†‡Mariana Luna Barros, Michael G. Cushion, Andrew D. Schwarz, Zoë R. Turner *
and Philip Mountford *

A new family of sterically demanding N₂N' heteroscorpionate pro-ligands (HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂N(H)R (R = ⁱPr, ^tBu, Ph, Xyl)) has been prepared via a straightforward modular synthetic route. An extensive study into the synthesis and characterisation of lithium, magnesium, calcium and zinc complexes supported by both 3,5-^tBu and 3,5-Me substituted N₂N' ligand families has been conducted. Attempted deprotonation of the pro-ligands with ⁿBuLi afforded the corresponding lithium salts Li{HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂NR} (R = ⁱPr (**1**), ^tBu (**2**), Ph (**3**) and Xyl (**4**)) but air- and thermal-sensitivity limited the yields of these potentially useful precursors; only the sterically encumbered ligand system allowed clean reactivity. Magnesium methyl complexes Mg{HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂NR}Me (R = ⁱPr (**5**) and R = Ph (**6**)) were prepared using an excess of the Grignard reagent MeMgCl. Magnesium butyl complexes were synthesised in good yields using the dialkyl precursor MgⁿBu₂ to afford Mg{HC(R'₂pz)₂SiMe₂NR}ⁿBu (R' = Me; R = ⁱPr (**7**), ^tBu (**8**), Ad (**9**), Ph (**10**), R' = ^tBu; R = ⁱPr (**11**), Ph (**12**)). Protonolysis reactions were used to synthesise magnesium and calcium amide complexes Mg{HC(R'₂pz)₂SiMe₂NR}{N(SiHMe₂)₂} (R' = Me; R = ⁱPr (**13**), ^tBu (**14**), Ph (**15**), R' = ^tBu; R = Ph (**16**)) or Mg{HC(R'₂pz)₂SiMe₂NR}{N(SiMe₃)₂} (R' = Me; R = ⁱPr (**17**), ^tBu (**18**), Ph (**19**), R' = ^tBu; R = Ph (**20**)), and Ca{HC(R'₂pz)₂SiMe₂NR}{N(SiMe₂)₂} (L) (R' = Me; L = thf; R = ⁱPr (**21**), ^tBu (**22**), Ph (**23**), R' = ^tBu; L = none; R = Ph (**24**)). Zinc methyl complexes Zn{HC(R'₂pz)₂SiMe₂NR}Me (R' = Me; R = ⁱPr (**25**), ^tBu (**26**), Ph (**27**), R' = ^tBu; R = Ph (**28**)) were prepared by reaction of the N₂N' heteroscorpionate pro-ligands with ZnMe₂. In preliminary studies, magnesium amide complexes **16** and **20** were evaluated as initiators for the ring-opening polymerisation (ROP) of ε-caprolactone (ε-CL) and *rac*-lactide (*rac*-LA). Although the overall polymerisation control was poor, **16** and **20** were found to be active initiators.

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Introduction

Heteroscorpionates, E(R_npz)₂(X),¹ are a versatile class of tridentate poly(pyrazolyl) ligand where one of the pyrazolyl groups of a classical homoscorpionate, E(R_npz)₃,² is replaced by a different C, N, O or S donor. Chiral classes of heteroscorpionate ligands have also been developed.³ They have demonstrated a wide range of uses in homogeneous catalysis⁴ and supramolecular^{3c,5} and bioinorganic chemistry,⁶ as well as a supporting ligand set for studying fundamental stoichiometric transformations.⁷

Substitution of the 3-position of the pyrazolyl ring has been demonstrated to clearly influence complex nuclearity; incorporation of sterically demanding *tert*-butyl substituents is an efficient way to favour mononuclear systems (Chart 1).⁸ This is particularly important in the case of group 2 and related metal complexes which are prone to redistribute *via* the Schlenk equilibrium and makes the synthesis of well-defined heteroleptic compounds L_nMX (L and X = a monoanionic ligand or ligand set) challenging.

Scorpionate ligands have found particular use in the ring-opening polymerisation (ROP) of cyclic esters; Chisholm *et al.* first reported bulky tris(pyrazolyl)hydroborate metal alkoxide complexes M{HB(^tBu₂pz)₃}OR (M = Mg, Zn, Ca) as active polymerisation initiators where stereoselectivity was ascribed to chain-end control.⁹ Otero and co-workers have extensively developed heteroscorpionate complexes based on Mg^{8a,d,10} and Zn,^{10b,11} (κ³ coordination), demonstrating moderate to good levels of heterotacticity (*P*_s = 0.78–0.85) or isotacticity (*P*_i = 0.77), and Al^{11c,12} (κ² coordination). Cui and co-workers have also reported zwitterionic, achiral N₂N' heteroscorpionate complexes to obtain highly isotactic-biased polylactide (*P*_i up to 0.85).¹³

Chemistry Research Laboratory, Department of Chemistry, University of Oxford,
Mansfield Road, Oxford, OX1 3TA, UK. E-mail: zoe.turner@chem.ox.ac.uk,
philip.mountford@chem.ox.ac.uk

†This paper is dedicated in admiration and friendship to Professor F. Geoff N. Cloke FRS.

‡Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available: Further experimental details, X-ray crystallographic details, CIF files and DFT calculation details. CCDC 1885899–1885910. For ESI and crystallographic data in CIF or other electronic format see DOI: 10.1039/c8dt04985h

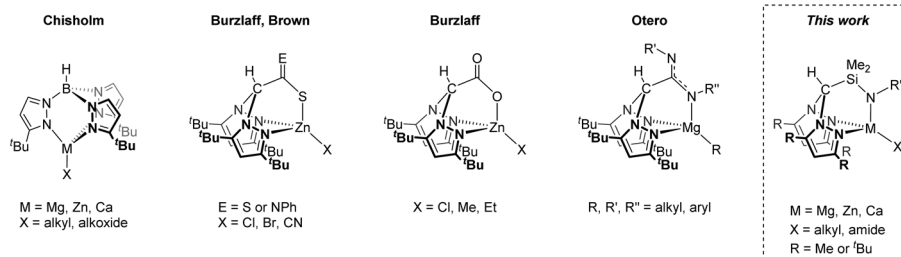


Chart 1 Scorpionate complexes with 3-*t*Bu substituents.

Use of alkaline earth metals is particularly desirable in homogeneous catalysis as they are earth-abundant and possess low toxicity.¹⁴ Furthermore, Hill and co-workers have recently demonstrated that the organometallic calcium complexes [(BDI)CaR]₂ are capable of nucleophilic alkylation of benzene, opening new possibilities for catalytic transformations with suitable ligand design.¹⁵

Our group has previously reported on the structures and reactivity of group 2 and group 12 scorpionate complexes.¹⁶ Of particular relevance to our current contribution is our previous communication on the preparation of the N₂N' heteroscorpionate rare earth complex Sc{HC(Me₂pz)₂SiMe₂N^{*i*}Pr}(CH₂SiMe₃)₂ and its ability to polymerise ethylene.¹⁷ Now we have developed a N₂N' heteroscorpionate ligand family with sterically demanding *tert*-butyl substituents in the 3-position to ensure that that only ligation of a single scorpionate ligand occurs, leaving one reactive M–X bond for further controlled reactivity. Herein, we report a study into the synthesis and structure of group 1, 2 and 12 complexes supported by this ligand type.

Results and discussion

Synthesis of a new family of sterically demanding N₂N' heteroscorpionate pro-ligands

We have previously reported the modular synthesis of the N₂N' heteroscorpionate pro-ligand HC(Me₂pz)₂SiMe₂N(H)^{*i*}Pr based on the 3,5-Me pyrazolyl substitution motif.¹⁷ This family has now been extended to include HC(Me₂pz)₂SiMe₂N(H)R (R = ^{*t*}Bu, Ad, Ph). These new pro-ligands were prepared by the same methodology of nucleophilic attack of the desired amine at electropositive silicon in HC(Me₂pz)₂SiMe₂Cl in 85–96% yield. For R = ^{*t*}Bu and Ad, an excess of amine was used in order to neutralise the HCl produced by generating the ammonium salt, [RNH₃]⁺Cl[−]. For R = Ph, NEt₃ is added to act as a superior Brønsted base and quench the HCl produced; the use of an excess of NH₂Ph is also unfavourable due to its low volatility (b.p. 184 °C at 1 atm).

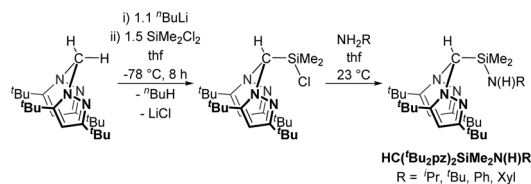
The 3,5-^{*t*}Bu and parent 3,5-H systems were initially targeted in order to investigate how modifying the stereoelectronic properties of the pyrazolyl rings would affect the subsequent properties of metal–ligand complexes. The ligand precursor HC(^{*t*}Bu₂pz)₂SiMe₂Cl was prepared by lithiation of the appropriate bis(pyrazolyl)methane followed by *in situ* addition of Li{HC

(^{*t*}Bu₂pz)₂ to an excess of SiMe₂Cl₂ (Scheme 1). The specific order of addition and non-stoichiometric conditions are used to prevent the double displacement of Cl[−]. The solid state structure was determined by a single crystal X-ray diffraction study and is depicted in Fig. S10 of the ESI.†

Attempts to prepare HC(pz)₂SiMe₂Cl using the same methodology resulted in an intractable mixture of products; deprotonation at the apical sp³ C is stabilised by the inductive effect of the two adjacent α-N atoms whereas the pyrazolyl ring C(5) is sp²-hybridised and is inductively stabilised by a single α-N atom. Use of a base such as ^{*n*}BuLi facilitates both pathways; coordination to N(1) favours C(5) deprotonation and coordination to N(2) favours apical carbon deprotonation. The mixture of lithiated species is trapped out by the hard SiMe₂Cl₂ electrophile to afford the mixture of substituted products where ring substitution is the major product.¹⁸

New pro-ligands HC(^{*t*}Bu₂pz)₂SiMe₂N(H)R (R = ^{*i*}Pr, ^{*t*}Bu, Ph, Xyl (Xyl = 2,6-C₆H₃Me₂)) were then prepared using procedures related to the 3,5-Me system in excellent yields of 94–99%. The influence of the sterically demanding 3,5-^{*t*}Bu groups becomes apparent with all but one reaction (that for R = ^{*i*}Pr) taking place at a higher temperature and over a longer time period than for the analogous 3,5-Me substituted homologues. For R = Xyl, lithiation afforded LiN(H)Xyl which is a potent nucleophile and reacts with 1 equivalent of HC(^{*t*}Bu₂pz)₂SiMe₂Cl in a salt elimination reaction.

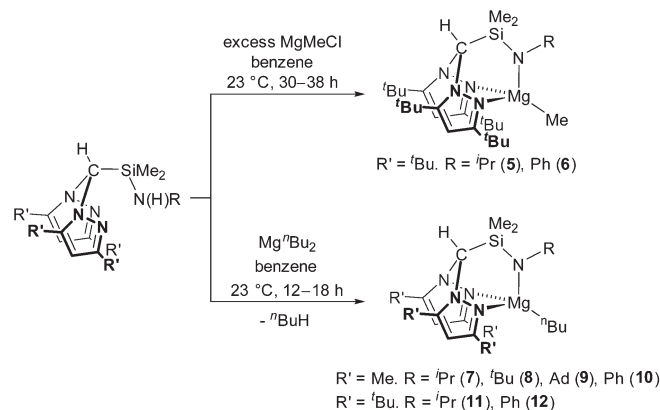
The ¹H and ¹³C{¹H} NMR spectra of HC(^{*t*}Bu₂pz)₂SiMe₂N(H)R (R = ^{*i*}Pr, ^{*t*}Bu, Ph, Xyl) all displayed the same type of diagnostic resonances. For example, where R = ^{*i*}Pr, singlets at 6.99 and 6.01 ppm correspond to the apical HC(^{*t*}Bu₂pz)₂ and pyrazolyl N₂C₃H^{*t*}Bu₂ protons, respectively, and are in a 1 : 2 ratio, a consequence of C_s molecular symmetry. Singlets at 1.40 and 1.15 ppm are attributed to the *tert*-butyl groups in the 3- and 5-positions. This assignment is analogous to the 3,5-Me system



Scheme 1 Synthesis of a new N₂N' heteroscorpionate pro-ligand family. See main text for further details of the second step.



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Scheme 2 Synthesis of $\text{N}_2\text{N}'$ supported magnesium alkyl complexes.

shifted ligand resonances with respect to the pro-ligands. Four multiplets define the ^nBu protons at approximately 2.1, 1.8, 1.3 and 0.4 ppm in all complexes. Two dimensional COSY experiments show that these multiplets represent the 2- ^nBu , 3- ^nBu , 4- ^nBu and 1- ^nBu protons respectively.

The molecular structures of complexes **5** and **10** were elucidated by single crystal X-ray diffraction studies and are depicted in Fig. 1 with selected metric parameters in Table 1. In both complexes, the magnesium is in a distorted tetrahedral environment with the $\text{N}_2\text{N}'$ heteroscorpionate ligand coordinated facially in a κ^3 binding mode. The increased steric demands of 3,5- $t\text{Bu}$ substituents in complex **5** with respect to 3,5-Me groups in complex **10** are observed through longer $\text{M}-\text{N}_{\text{pz}}$ bond lengths (**5**: 2.1799(16) and 2.1911(16) Å; **10**: 2.1699(19) and 2.138(2) Å) and a more acute $\text{N}_{\text{amide}}-\text{Mg}-\text{C}$ bond angle (**5**: 122.09(8)° and **10**: 138.18(9)°). The $\text{M}-\text{N}_{\text{pz}}$ and $\text{M}-\text{C}$ bond lengths are comparable to previously reported four-coordinate tris(pyrazolyl)hydroborate (tpb) magnesium methyl complexes,²⁸ the NNN' heteroscorpionate complex $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{tBu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{CNETn}^t\text{Bu}\}\text{Me}$ reported by Otero and co-workers,^{8d} and the NNO magnesium butyl complex $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2(3,5\text{-}^t\text{Bu}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_3\text{O})\}^n\text{Bu}$ reported by our group.^{16b}

Straightforward protonolysis reactions with 1 equivalent of the $\text{N}_2\text{N}'$ heteroscorpionate ligands with 1 equivalent of $\text{Mg}\{\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2\}_2$ or $\text{Mg}\{\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2\}_2$ yielded $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{R}'_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NR}\}\{\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2\}$ ($\text{R}' = \text{Me}$; $\text{R} = \text{iPr}$ (**13**), $t\text{Bu}$ (**14**), Ph (**15**), $\text{R}' = \text{tBu}$; $\text{R} = \text{tBu}$ (**16**)) or $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{R}'_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NR}\}\{\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2\}$ ($\text{R}' = \text{Me}$; $\text{R} = \text{iPr}$ (**17**), $t\text{Bu}$ (**18**), Ph (**19**), $\text{R}' = \text{tBu}$; $\text{R} = \text{Ph}$ (**20**)), respectively, in moderate to good isolated yields (49–77%) (Scheme 3). Homoleptic sandwich complexes of the 3,5-Me substituted ligand can be isolated when a 2 : 1 ligand : metal stoichiometry is used, and the molecular structure of $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NPh}\}_2$ has been determined by a single crystal X-ray diffraction study (see ESI Fig. S12 and Table S3†). Using the more sterically demanding 3,5- $t\text{Bu}$ substituted ligand, the reactions proceeded cleanly at 60 °C and there was no evidence of sandwich complex formation; indeed, complexes **16** and **20** were the only products of 2 : 1 NMR scale reactions under identical conditions.

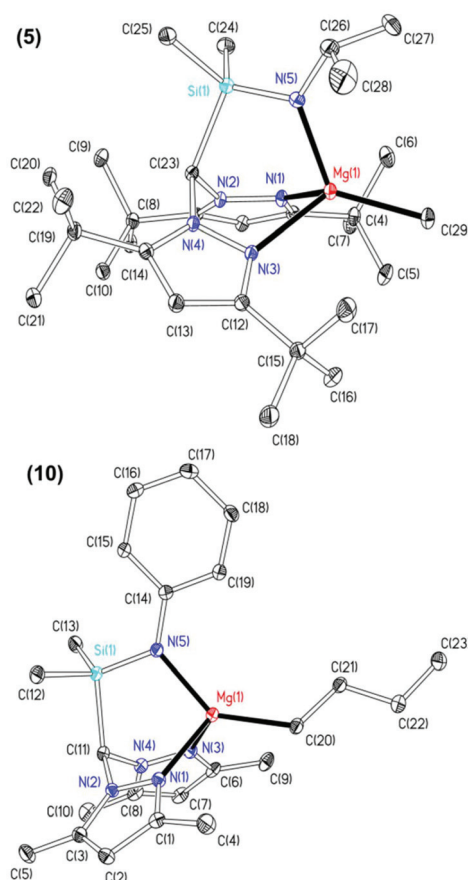
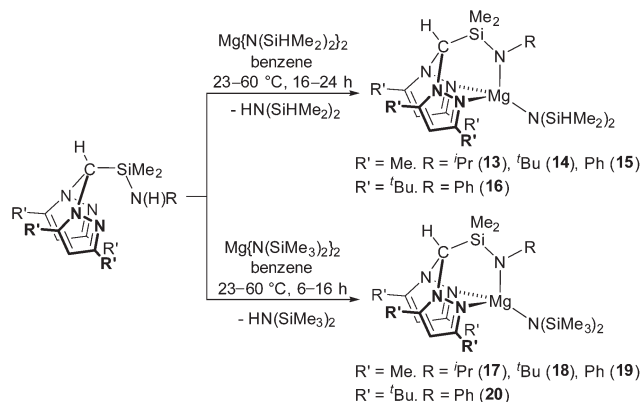


Fig. 1 Thermal displacement ellipsoid drawings (20% probability ellipsoids) of $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{tBu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{N}^i\text{Pr}\}\text{Me}$ (**5**, top) and $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NPh}\}^n\text{Bu}$ (**10**, bottom). All hydrogen atoms have been omitted for clarity.

Table 1 Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (°) for complexes **5** and **10**

	5	10
$\text{Mg}(1)-\text{N}(1)$	2.1799(16)	2.1699(19)
$\text{Mg}(1)-\text{N}(3)$	2.1911(16)	2.138(2)
$\text{Mg}(1)-\text{N}(5)$	2.0083(17)	2.0436(19)
$\text{Mg}(1)-\text{C}(20)/(29)$	2.145(2)	2.144(2)
$\text{N}(1)-\text{Mg}(1)-\text{C}(20)/(29)$	123.01(7)	112.98(9)
$\text{N}(3)-\text{Mg}(1)-\text{C}(20)/(29)$	123.88(7)	114.15(9)
$\text{N}(5)-\text{Mg}(1)-\text{C}(20)/(29)$	122.09(8)	138.18(9)

The NMR spectra of complexes **13–20** are consistent with C_s molecular symmetry on the NMR timescale, assuming fast rotation about the $\text{Mg}-\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2$ and $\text{Mg}-\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2$ bonds. Complexes **16**, **17**, **19** and **20** have been structurally authenticated in the solid state by single crystal X-ray diffraction studies and are the first examples of $\text{N}_2\text{N}'$ heteroscorpionate magnesium amide molecular structures. The molecular structures of complex **16** and **20** are depicted in Fig. 2 with selected metric parameters in Table 2 (see ESI Fig. S13 and S14 and Table S2† for complexes **17** and **19**). The approximately tetra-



Scheme 3 Synthesis of N_2N' supported magnesium amide complexes.

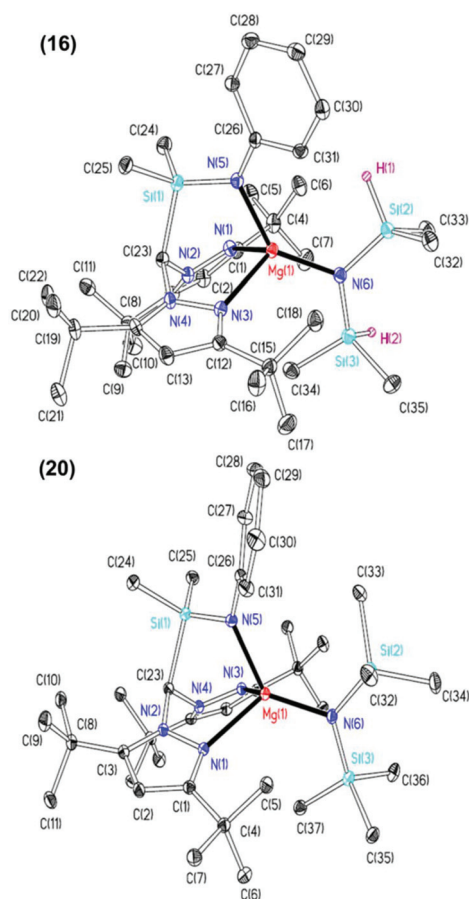
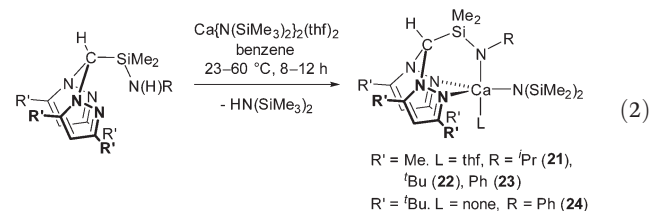


Fig. 2 Thermal displacement ellipsoid drawings (20% probability ellipsoids) of $Mg(HC(tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh)\{N(SiHMe_2)_2\}$ (**16**, top) and $Mg(HC(tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh)\{N(SiMe_3)_2\}$ (**20**, bottom). C-Bound hydrogen atoms have been omitted for clarity.

hedral magnesium centres are κ^3 bound to the N_2N' heteroscorpionate ligand. The average $Mg-N_{pz}$ bond lengths (**16**: 2.192 Å. **20**: 2.230 Å) are longer than those in $Mg\{C(Me_2pz)_3\}\{N(SiMe_3)_2\}$ (2.115 Å) consistent with the changing steric profiles of the three compounds; the $Mg-N(SiRMe_2)_2$ distances are

within the expected ranges. The largest $N-Mg-N(SiRMe_2)_2$ angle and longest $Mg-N_{pz}$ bond in both **16** and **20** are associated with N(5) due to steric repulsion between the methyl groups attached to Si(2) and the phenyl group attached to N(5). The Si(3)Me₃ group has less steric impact as it is able to lodge into the cleft between the pyrazolyl rings. The smaller average $N_{pz}-Mg-N(SiRMe_2)_2$ angle in **16** (114.2°) compared to that in **20** (120.4°) is consistent with the presence of the less bulky SiHMe₂ group with respect to SiMe₃ group.

Treatment of $HC(R'_2pz)_2SiMe_2N(H)R$ ($R' = Me, tBu$) with 1 equivalent of $Ca\{N(SiMe_3)_2\}_2(thf)_2$ afforded $Ca\{HC(Me_2pz)_2SiMe_2NR\}\{N(SiMe_2)_2\}(thf)$ ($R = iPr$ (**21**), tBu (**22**), Ph (**23**)) or, in the case of the more sterically demanding ligand system, thf-free $Ca\{HC(tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh\}\{N(SiMe_2)_2\}$ (**24**) in good yields (60–74%), alongside 1 equivalent of $HN(SiMe_3)_2$ (eqn (2)). As previously observed, the reaction of the 3,5-Me pro-ligand proceeded at 23 °C whilst the bulkier 3,5- tBu pro-ligand required elevated temperatures of 60 °C to proceed.



Due to the similar ionic radii of Mg^{II} and Zn^{II} ($Mg^{II,4} C.N. = 0.570$ Å, $Zn^{II,4} C.N. = 0.600$ Å), zinc alkyl complexes were targeted as a comparison to magnesium alkyl complexes **5–11**. Protonolysis of the N_2N' heteroscorpionate pro-ligands with $ZnMe_2$ afforded $Zn\{HC(R'_2pz)_2SiMe_2NR\}Me$ ($R' = Me$; $R = iPr$ (**25**), tBu (**26**), Ph (**27**), $R' = tBu$; $R = Ph$ (**28**)) in good yields (70–85%) (eqn (3)). The preparation of complex **28** required an elevated temperature of 60 °C, extended reaction time of 72 h and an excess of $ZnMe_2$ in order to drive the reaction cleanly to completion.

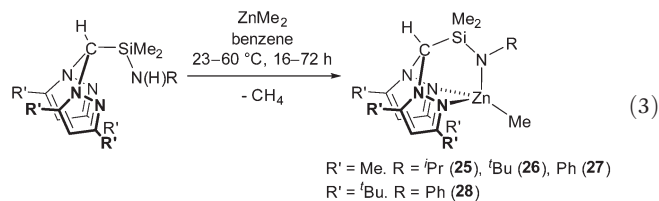


Table 2 Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (°) for complexes **16** and **20**

	16	20
Mg(1)–N(1)	2.167(4)	2.254(2)
Mg(1)–N(3)	2.217(4)	2.206(2)
Mg(1)–N(5)	2.027(4)	2.023(2)
Mg(1)–N(6)	2.002(4)	2.023(2)
N(1)–Mg(1)–N(6)	109.39(15)	123.88(8)
N(3)–Mg(1)–N(6)	119.10(15)	116.93(8)
N(5)–Mg(1)–N(6)	138.33(16)	129.76(8)

The molecular structures of complexes **25**, **27** and **28** were elucidated by single crystal X-ray diffraction studies and are depicted in Fig. 3 with selected metric parameters in Table 3 (see ESI Fig. S15, Table S3† for data regarding complex **25**). The zinc centre in complexes **27** and **28** is in a distorted tetrahedral coordination environment. The more acute N(5)–Zn(1)–C_{CH₃} bond angle (**27**: 135.78(11)° and **28**: 125.94(14)°), longer Zn(1)–N_{pz} (**27**: 2.144(2) and 2.155(2) Å and **28**: 2.171(4) and 2.202(4) Å) and Zn(1)–C_{CH₃} bond distances (**27**: 1.981(3) and **28**: 2.041(3) Å) of complex **28** with respect to **27** clearly reflect the differing steric demands of the 3,5-Me and 3,5-ⁱBu pyrazolyl substituents. This trend is also observed in other examples of structurally characterised NNN', NNO,^{8e,16b,29} NNCp^{4f} heteroscorpionate and tris(pyrazolyl)hydroborate^{28b,30} zinc methyl complexes. Otero and co-workers reported the only other example of a structurally characterised NNN' zinc methyl complex, Zn{HC(^tBu₂pz)₂CN₂ⁱPr₂}Me.^{11a} Here some asymmetry in the Zn–N_{pz} bond lengths is observed (2.236(3) and 2.118(3)

Table 3 Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (°) for complexes **27** and **28**

	27	28
Zn(1)–N(1)	2.144(2)	2.171(4)
Zn(1)–N(3)	2.155(2)	2.202(4)
Zn(1)–N(5)	1.979(2)	1.976(3)
Zn(1)–C(20)	1.981(3)	—
Zn(1)–C(32)	—	2.041(3)
N(1)–Zn(1)–C(20)	114.48(11)	—
N(1)–Zn(1)–C(32)	—	122.59(14)
N(3)–Zn(1)–C(20)	116.86(11)	—
N(3)–Zn(1)–C(32)	—	120.12(14)
N(5)–Zn(1)–C(20)	135.78(11)	—
N(5)–Zn(1)–C(32)	—	125.94(14)

Å). The M–N_{pz} and M–C_{CH₃} bond lengths in **28** (2.171(4), 2.202(4) and 1.976(3) Å, respectively) are shorter than those in Mg{HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂NⁱPr}Me (**1**) (2.1799(16), 2.1911(16) and 2.145(2) Å, respectively) in accord with zinc being more polarising and covalent.^{16b}

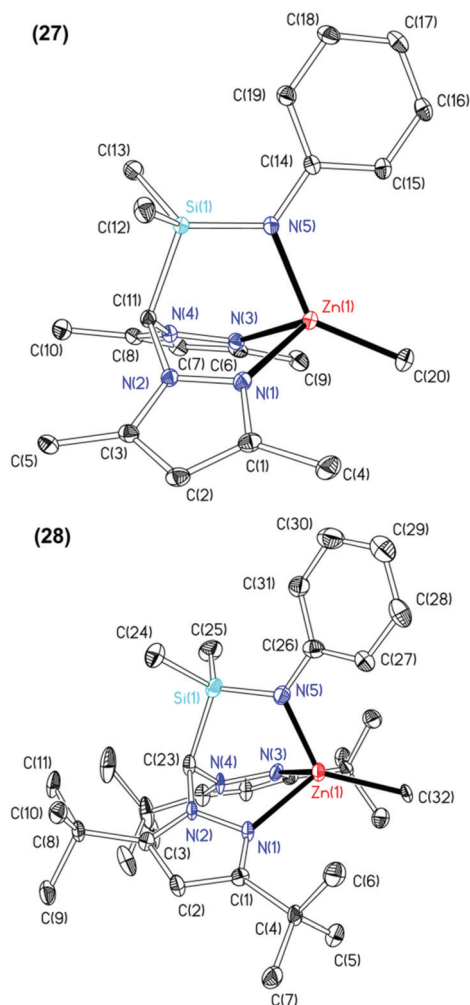


Fig. 3 Thermal displacement ellipsoid drawings (20% probability ellipsoids) of (top) Zn{HC(Me₂pz)₂SiMe₂NPh}Me (**27**, top) and Zn{HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂NPh}Me (**28**, bottom). All hydrogen atoms have been omitted for clarity.

Ring-opening polymerisation of ϵ -caprolactone and *rac*-lactide

One of the aims of this work was to assess the performance of the NNN' heteroscorpionate amide complexes for the catalytic ring-opening polymerisation (ROP) of ϵ -caprolactone (ϵ -CL) and *rac*-lactide (*rac*-LA) monomers, in light of the success of related complexes and our previous studies into the ROP of cyclic esters.^{16b,31} An initial study was undertaken using ϵ -CL owing to the relative ease of its polymerisation with respect to LA due to the favourable release of 7-membered ring strain.

Initial studies at room temperature in thf or toluene showed the amide complexes **16** and **20** to be highly active for the ROP of ϵ -CL, reaching full conversion of 100 equivalents of ϵ -CL in 20–30 minutes in either solvent. The results are summarised in Table 4. Both complexes afforded much higher than expected M_n values by gel permeation chromatography (GPC) (66 620–89 740 g mol^{−1}), consistent with a much faster rate of propagation than rate of initiation in a coordination-insertion mechanism.³² The observed M_n values are in slightly better agreement with calculated M_n for polymerisations performed in thf. This is likely to be due to the effect of thf competing with the monomer for coordination to the metal centre,

Table 4 Solution polymerisation of ϵ -CL by Mg{HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂NPh}{N(SiHMe₂)₂} (**16**) and Mg{HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂NPh}{N(SiMe₃)₂} (**20**)^a

	Solvent	Yield ^b (%)	Time ^c	M_n ^{d,e}	M_w/M_n
16	thf	76	25	71 450	1.86
16	Toluene	79	25	89 740	3.17
20	thf	81	30	66 620	1.67
20	Toluene	73	20	84 840	2.79

^a [ϵ -CL]:[catalyst] = 100 : 1, 3.4 mL solvent at 23 °C. ^b Isolated yield at 100% conversion. ^c Minutes. ^d Molecular weights (g mol^{−1}) determined from GPC using the appropriate Mark–Houwink corrections. ^e Expected M_n (g mol^{−1}) for 1 chain growing per metal centre at 100% conversion, ignoring end groups = 11 414.



thus reducing the relative rate of propagation (compared to that in non-coordinating toluene solvent).

The PDIs (polydispersity indices, M_w/M_n) for polymerisations performed in thf are also narrower than corresponding polymerisations performed in toluene (although these are collectively all in the moderate to poor range, 1.67–3.17). This is also likely to be a direct consequence of the coordinative nature of thf compared to toluene. Broad PDIs are well-documented to be the result of intra- and inter-molecular transesterification reactions.³² It is reasonable to assume that the presence of a thf molecule bound to a metal coordination site would reduce the likelihood of ‘backbiting’ by a growing polymer chain at the metal centre. Due to the viscous nature of the polymer formed and the short times involved, it was not possible to acquire full kinetic data over the course of each polymerisation, nor was it possible to collect MALDI-ToF analysis of polymer samples due to the high observed M_n values. Coordination-insertion has been deduced to be the most likely mechanism of polymerisation with these complexes.

There are a relatively small number of metal complexes supported by heteroscorpionate ligands used as initiators for polymerisation of ϵ -CL. Examples include zinc amides and alkyls,^{11a,b,16b,33} rare earth dialkyls,³⁴ aluminium alkyls and alkoxides,³⁵ and magnesium alkyls and amides.^{8d,16b,24a} We have previously reported the N_2O heteroscorpionate complex $Mg\{HC(Me_2pz)_2(3,5-^tBu_2C_6H_3O)\}\{N(SiHMe_2)_2\}$ which afforded complete conversion of 100 equivalents of ϵ -CL in toluene (but not thf) with high M_n (30 870 g mol⁻¹) and broad PDI (2.76). The related N_2N' magnesium alkyl complexes described by Otero and co-workers, $Mg\{HC(Me_2pz)_2CN_2R_2\}R'$, afforded rapid polymerisation (e.g. $R = Et$, $R' = CH_2SiMe_3$, 97% conversion of 500 equivalents in 1 minute at 20 °C and $R = ^iPr$, $R' = CH_2SiMe_3$, 62% at -60 °C) with narrow PDIs (1.41 and 1.12, respectively). The steric demands of the amidinate group were found to be important, with increased bulk resulting in slower initiators.

Polymerisation studies were next extended to the more challenging monomer, *rac*-LA. Due to the more encouraging results with ϵ -CL observed using thf as a solvent, it was decided to focus solely on thf-mediated polymerisations. The results are summarised in Table 5.

One of the several interesting contrasts with the ϵ -CL polymerisation results is that the *rac*-LA polymerisations all required elevated temperatures of 70 °C and extended reaction times, largely due to the unfavourable release of the stable 6-membered ring strain in *rac*-LA when compared to the less thermodynamically stable 7-membered ring strain in ϵ -CL. The observed M_n values (51 080–51 480 g mol⁻¹) are again large, and the relatively broad PDIs (1.45–1.48) are also evident in the *rac*-LA polymerisations, no doubt due in part to the increased tendency of transesterification side reactions at elevated temperatures. Disappointingly, no stereochemical enrichment in the PLA polymer produced was observed ($P_r \approx 0.5$).

Despite the relatively poor polymerisation control demonstrated by the complexes tested, kinetic studies were carried out in some cases to investigate further the polymerisation

Table 5 Solution polymerisation of *rac*-LA by $Mg\{HC(^tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh\}\{N(SiHMe_2)_2\}$ (**16**) and $Mg\{HC(^tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh\}\{N(SiMe_3)_2\}$ (**20**)^a

	Conv. ^b (%)	Time (h)	M_n ^c	M_n (calcd) ^d	M_w/M_n	k_{obs} (min ⁻¹)
16	90	1.5	55 080	12 972	1.48	0.03(2)
20	89	0.75	51 480	12 799	1.45	0.04(3)
Ref 8a	96	1.0	14 000	13 800	1.09	—
Ref 8d	91	0.03	12 800	13 100	1.09	—

^a Conditions: [*rac*-LA]:[catalyst] = 100 : 1, 6.0 mL thf at 70 °C. ^b % conversion by ¹H NMR spectroscopy. ^c Molecular weights (g mol⁻¹) determined from GPC using the appropriate Mark–Houwink corrections.³⁶

^d Expected M_n (g mol⁻¹) for 1 chain growing per metal centre at the % conversion by ¹H NMR spectroscopy.

process. All of the catalysts tested showed first order consumption of *rac*-LA after an initial induction period. Similar induction periods have also been observed in the ROP of cyclic esters using aluminium,³⁷ yttrium,³⁸ iron,³⁹ tin alkoxides and amides. In these instances the induction period was thought to correspond to a period of ligand rearrangement around the metal centre, in order to allow the monomer access to the coordination sphere.⁴⁰ An example semi-logarithmic plot is shown in Fig. 4 for the catalyst $Mg\{HC(^tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh\}\{N(SiHMe_2)_2\}$ (**16**). The apparent rate constant for the polymerisation, k_{obs} , was 0.03(2) min⁻¹. This compares with a k_{obs} value of 0.04(3) min⁻¹ for the related catalyst $Mg\{HC(^tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh\}\{N(SiMe_3)_2\}$ (**20**).

Though there are no other specific examples of scorpionate magnesium amide complexes for lactide polymerisation, complexes **16** and **20** compare well with initiators with respect to the pioneering homoscorpionate tris(pyrazolyl)hydroborate (tpb) magnesium and zinc alkoxides for lactide polymerisation reported by Chisholm.^{9c} Kinetic studies under pseudo first order conditions resulted in a value of $k_{obs} = 0.039$ min⁻¹ for $Mg\{HC(3-^tBupz)_3\}OEt$. When extended to calcium, initiators were found to be two orders of magnitude faster.^{9b} Complexes

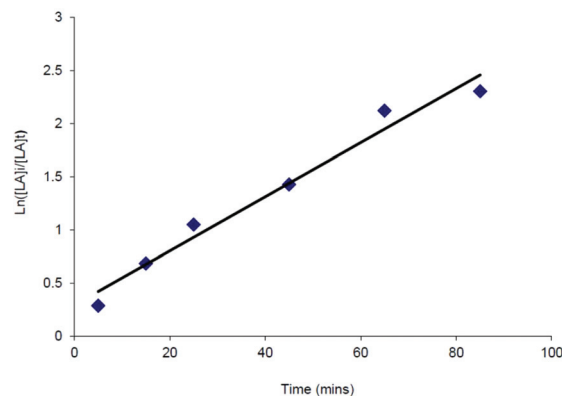


Fig. 4 First order semi-logarithmic plot for *rac*-LA consumption using $Mg\{HC(^tBu_2pz)_2SiMe_2NPh\}\{N(SiHMe_2)_2\}$ (**16**). Conditions [*rac*-LA]₀: [**16**] = 100 : 1, 6 mL thf, 70 °C, 0.1 mL aliquots taken at the given intervals.



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^tBuLi (27.7 mL, 44.3 mmol; 1.6 M in hexanes) over a period of 20 minutes. The resultant yellow slurry was stirred for 12 h at −78 °C to afford LiHC(^tBu₂pz)₂ which was reacted on *in situ*. To a stirred solution of SiMe₂Cl₂ (7.28 mL, 60.4 mmol) in thf (100 mL) at −78 °C was added LiHC(^tBu₂pz)₂ over a period of 20 minutes. The resultant pale-yellow solution was stirred for 8 h at −78 °C. The volatiles were removed under reduced pressure to give a colourless, oily solid which was extracted into pentane (3 × 40 mL) and dried under reduced pressure. The oily solid was recrystallised from pentane (120 mL) at −80 °C, filtered and dried under reduced pressure to afford HC(^tBu₂pz)₂SiMe₂Cl as a colourless powder. Yield: 18.0 g (96%). Diffraction-quality crystals were grown from a pentane solution. ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 6.80 (1 H, s, HC(^tBu₂pz)₂), 6.01 (2 H, s, N₂C₃H(^tBu₂)), 1.27 (18 H, s, 3-N₂C₃H(^tBu₂)), 1.25 (18 H, s, 5-N₂C₃H(^tBu₂)), 0.99 (6 H, s, SiMe). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 158.8 (3-N₂C₃H(^tBu₂)), 152.3 (5-N₂C₃H(^tBu₂)), 102.7 (4-N₂C₃H(^tBu₂)), 74.0 (HC(^tBu₂pz)₂), 32.9 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 32.1 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 31.4 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 30.7 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 6.7 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm^{−1}): 1541 (m), 1531 (m), 1361 (s), 1334 (m), 1319 (w), 1249 (s), 1230 (m), 1203 (w), 1125 (w), 1084 (w), 1059 (w), 1012 (w), 999 (m), 867 (w), 844 (w), 652 (w). EI-MS: *m/z* = 465 (6%) [^M]⁺, 429 (100%) [^M − Cl]⁺, 372 (82%) [^M − SiMe₂Cl]⁺. Anal. found (calcd for C₂₅H₄₅ClN₄Si): C, 64.5 (64.6); H, 9.7 (9.8); N, 11.9 (12.0)%.

HC(^{*t*}Bu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)R (**R** = ^{*i*}Pr or ^{*s*}Bu) illustrated for **R** = ^{*i*}Pr. To a stirred solution of HC(^{*t*}Bu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂Cl (4.00 g, 8.60 mmol) in Et₂O (60 mL) at 0 °C, was added NH₂^{*i*}Pr (2.20 mL, 25.8 mmol). The resultant colourless suspension was allowed to warm to 23 °C and stirred for 20 h. The suspension was filtered, dried under reduced pressure and extracted into pentane (3 × 20 mL). The volatiles were removed under reduced pressure to afford HC(^{*t*}Bu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)^{*i*}Pr as a thick, colourless oil. Yield: 4.03 g (96%). ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 6.99 (1 H, s, HC(^{*t*}Bu₂p_z)₂), 6.01 (2 H, s, N₂C₃H(^{*t*}Bu₂)), 3.09 (1 H, sept, ³J_{HH} = 6.2 Hz, H_{CMe₂}), 1.40 (18 H, s, 3-N₂C₃H(^{*t*}Bu₂)), 1.15 (18 H, s, 5-N₂C₃H(^{*t*}Bu₂)), 0.96 (6 H, d, ³J_{HH} = 6.2 Hz, H_{CMe₂}), 0.37 (6 H, s, SiMe). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 158.1 (3-N₂C₃H(^{*t*}Bu₂)), 153.9 (5-N₂C₃H(^{*t*}Bu₂)), 102.5 (4-N₂C₃H(^{*t*}Bu₂)), 76.5 (HC(^{*t*}Bu₂p_z)₂), 43.3 (H_{CMe₂}), 32.4 (3-N₂C₃H(C_{Me₂})₂), 32.2 (5-N₂C₃H(C_{Me₂})₂), 30.8 (3-N₂C₃H(C_{Me₂})₂), 30.5 (5-N₂C₃H(C_{Me₂})₂), 28.3 (H_{CMe₂}), 0.7 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm⁻¹): 3363 (w), 2712 (w), 1536 (s), 1394 (s), 1362 (s), 1343 (s), 1316 (s), 1276 (m), 1213 (s), 1168 (s), 1131 (s), 1067 (m), 1021 (s), 1003 (s), 931 (w), 880 (m), 828 (m), 685 (w). EI-MS: *m/z* = 487 (75%) [M]⁺, 430 (100%) [M – N(H)^{*i*}Pr]⁺. Anal. found (calcd for C₂₈H₅₃N₅Si): C, 69.0 (68.9); H, 11.1 (11.0); N, 14.2 (14.4)%.

HCC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)Xyl. To a stirred solution of NH₂Xyl (1.06 mL, 8.60 mmol) in Et₂O (20 mL) at -78 °C, was added ⁿBuLi (5.37 mL, 8.60 mmol; 1.6 M in hexanes) over a 10 minutes period. The resultant colourless suspension was stirred for 1.5 h at -78 °C to afford LiN(H)Xyl which was reacted on *in situ*. To a stirred solution of HCC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂Cl (4.00 g, 8.60 mmol) in Et₂O (50 mL) at -78 °C, was added LiN

To a stirred solution of $\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{Cl}$ (4.00 g, 13.5 mmol) in Et_2O (60 mL) at 0°C , was added a solution of NH_2Ad (5.09 g, 33.7 mmol) in Et_2O (20 mL). The resultant white suspension was allowed to warm to 23°C and stirred for 14 h. The suspension was filtered, the solid washed with Et_2O (3×10 mL) and the volatiles removed under reduced pressure to give a white oily solid. The oily solid was recrystallised from hexane (20 mL) at -80°C , filtered and dried under reduced pressure to afford $\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Ad}$ as a colourless solid. Yield: 4.71 g (85%). ^1H NMR (C_6D_6 , 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 6.14 (1 H, s, $\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2$), 5.67 (2 H, s, $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 2.21 (6 H, s, $3\text{-N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 1.94 (6 H, s, $5\text{-N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 1.90 (3 H, m, Ad), 1.67 (6 H, app. d, app. $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 3\text{ Hz}$, Ad), 1.51 (6 H, m, Ad), 0.54 (6 H, s, SiMe). $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR (C_6D_6 , 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 146.5 ($3\text{-N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 140.2 ($5\text{-N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 106.4 ($4\text{-N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 69.9 ($\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2$), 50.0 (1-Ad), 47.6 36.6 (2,4,6,8,9,10-Ad), 30.4 (3,5,7-Ad), 13.8 ($3\text{-N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 11.0 ($5\text{-N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 2.2 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm^{-1}): 3342 (m) 2951 (s), 2853 (m), 1560 (s), 1461 (w), 1376 (m), 1258 (m), 1096 (m), 1018 (w), 967 (m), 822 (w), 799 (m), 721 (w). EI-MS: $m/z = 411$ (100%) $[\text{M}]^+$, 316 (10%) $[\text{M} - \text{Me}_2\text{pz}]^+$. Anal. found (calcd. for $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{37}\text{N}_5\text{Si}$): C, 67.0 (67.1); H, 9.1 (9.1); N, 17.0 (17.0)%.

HC(Me₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)Ph. To a stirred solution of NH₂Ph (1.23 mL, 13.5 mmol) in Et₂O (20 mL), was added NEt₃ (3.75 mL, 26.9 mmol). This mixture was slowly added to a stirred solution of HC(Me₂p_z)₂SiMe₂Cl (4.00 g, 13.5 mmol) in Et₂O (50 mL) at 0 °C. The resultant suspension was allowed to warm to 23 °C and stirred for 14 h. The suspension was filtered, the solid washed with Et₂O (3 × 10 mL) and the volatiles removed under reduced pressure to afford a yellow oily solid which was extracted into pentane (3 × 10 mL) and dried under reduced pressure. The colourless solid was recrystallised from pentane (20 mL) at –30 °C, filtered and dried under reduced pressure to afford HC(Me₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)Ph as a colourless solid. Yield: 4.52 g (95%). ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 7.08 (2 H, t, ³J_{HH} = 7.9 Hz, 3-C₆H₅), 6.74 (1 H, t, ³J_{HH} = 7.5 Hz, 4-C₆H₅), 6.61 (2 H, d, ³J_{HH} = 7.5 Hz, 2-C₆H₅), 6.02 (1 H, s, HC(Me₂p_z)₂), 5.61 (2 H, s, N₂C₃HMe₂), 4.34 (1 H, s, NH), 2.16 (6 H, s, 3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 1.73 (6 H, s, 5-N₂C₃HMe₂), 0.60 (6 H, s, SiMe). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 147.7 (3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 142.9 (1-C₆H₅), 139.9 (5-N₂C₃HMe₂), 129.8 (3-C₆H₅), 118.7 (4-C₆H₅), 117.5 (2-C₆H₅), 106.7 (4-N₂C₃HMe₂), 67.0 (HC(Me₂p_z)₂), 13.9 (3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 10.6 (5-N₂C₃HMe₂), –0.2 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm^{–1}): 3345 (m), 2930 (s), 2731 (m), 1602 (w), 1552 (s), 1463 (m), 1376 (w), 1296 (m), 1246 (m), 1145 (w), 1110 (w), 1025 (s), 972 (m), 907 (m), 807 (s), 787 (s), 747 (m), 691 (m). EI-MS: *m/z* = 353 (100%) [M]⁺. Anal. found (calcd for C₁₉H₂₇N₅Si): C, 64.5 (64.5); H, 7.7 (7.7); N, 19.7 (19.7)%.

HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂Cl. To a stirred solution of H₂C(^tBu₂p_z)₂ (15.0 g, 40.3 mmol) in THF (150 mL) at -78 °C, was added

General procedure for the synthesis of $\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(^t\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NR}\}^n\text{Bu}$ ($\text{R} = ^i\text{Pr}$ (11), Ph (12)) illustrated for $\text{R} = \text{Ph}$ (12). To a stirred solution of $\text{HC}(^t\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Ph}$

(0.50 g, 0.96 mmol) in benzene (30 mL), was added Mg^nBu_2 (1.92 mL, 1.92 mmol; 1.0 M in heptanes). The resultant yellow solution was stirred for 18 h. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure to afford a colourless solid, which was washed with cold pentane (3×5 mL, -78°C) and dried under reduced pressure. The solid was recrystallised from pentane (15 mL) at -80°C , filtered and dried under reduced pressure to afford complex **12** as a colourless solid. Yield = 0.38 g (66%). ^1H NMR (C_6D_6 , 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 7.29 (2 H, app. t, app. $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.6$ Hz, 3- C_6H_5), 7.2 (2 H, d, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 8.2$ Hz, 2- C_6H_5), 6.82 (1 H, t, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.3$ Hz, 4- C_6H_5), 6.52 (1 H, s, $\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2$), 5.96 (2 H, s, $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 2.08 (2 H, m, 2- Mg^nBu), 1.83 (2 H, app. sext, app. $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.2$ Hz, 3- Mg^nBu), 1.47 (18 H, s, 3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 1.27 (3 H, m, 4- Mg^nBu), 1.10 (18 H, s, 5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 0.49 (2 H, m, 1- Mg^nBu), 0.15 (6 H, s, SiMe). $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR (C_6D_6 , 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 164.0 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 157.1 (1- C_6H_5), 153.8 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 129.0 (3- C_6H_5), 124.4 (2- C_6H_5), 116.2 (4- C_6H_5), 103.2 (4- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 69.2 ($\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2$), 33.0 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 32.8 (2- Mg^nBu), 32.6 (3- Mg^nBu), 32.2 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 31.5 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 30.7 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 15.8 (1- Mg^nBu), 14.6 (4- Mg^nBu), 0.33 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm^{-1}): 1587 (s), 1534 (w), 1486 (s), 1425 (w), 1367 (m), 1284 (s), 1222 (w), 1209 (m), 1173 (w), 1148 (w), 1059 (m), 1027 (m), 995 (m), 957 (s), 871 (w), 825 (m), 800 (s), 791 (m), 764 (m). EI-MS: $m/z = 429$ (60%) [$\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2$] $^+$. Anal. found (calcd for $\text{C}_{35}\text{H}_{59}\text{MgN}_5\text{Si}$): C, 69.7 (69.8); H, 9.9 (9.9); N, 11.7 (11.6)%.

$\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NR}\}\{\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2\}$ ($\text{R} = \text{'Pr}$ (13), 'Bu (14), Ph (15)) illustrated for $\text{R} = \text{'Pr}$ (13). To a stirred solution of $\text{Mg}\{\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2\}_2$ (0.450 g, 1.56 mmol) in benzene (20 mL), was added a solution of $\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{'Pr}$ (0.500 g, 1.56 mmol) in benzene (20 mL). The resultant orange solution was stirred for 16 h. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure, the solid washed with cold pentane (3×5 mL, -78°C) and dried under reduced pressure to afford complex **13** as an orange solid. Yield = 0.50 g (68%). ^1H NMR (C_6D_6 , 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 5.41 (2 H, sept, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 3.0$ Hz, $\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2$), 5.34 (2 H, s, $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 5.00 (1 H, s, $\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2$), 3.85 (1 H, sept, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 6.3$ Hz, HCMe_2), 2.36 (6 H, s, 3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 1.55 (6 H, s, 5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 1.49 (6 H, d, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 6.3$ Hz, HCMe_2), 0.55 (12 H, d, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 3.4$ Hz, $\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2$), -0.90 (6 H, s, SiMe). $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR (C_6D_6 , 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 149.9 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 139.4 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 105.8 (4- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 63.8 ($\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2$), 47.5 (HCMe_2), 31.5 (HCMe_2), 13.8 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 10.4 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 4.6 ($\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2$), 1.3 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm^{-1}): 2925 (s), 2361 (m), 2067 (w), 1553 (m), 1506 (w), 1459 (s), 1377 (s), 1315 (s), 1280 (m), 1242 (s), 1164 (s), 1132 (m), 1045 (m), 945 (m), 892 (s), 826 (m), 800 (m), 756 (m), 729 (m). EI-MS: $m/z = 474$ (100%) [$\text{M}]^+$, 342 (20%) [$\text{M} - \text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2$] $^+$. Anal. found (calcd for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{42}\text{MgN}_6\text{Si}_3$): C, 50.2 (50.5); H, 8.7 (8.9); N, 17.6 (17.7)%.

$\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NPh}\}\{\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2\}$ (16**).** To a solution of $\text{Mg}\{\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2\}_2$ (0.17 g, 0.59 mmol) in benzene (15 mL) was added slowly $\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Ph}$ (0.31 g, 0.59 mmol) in benzene (15 mL). The mixture was heated to 60°C and stirred for 24 h. Volatiles were removed under

reduced pressure to give a pale-yellow solid. Recrystallisation from a saturated pentane solution at -30°C yielded complex **16** as an analytically pure, off-white solid. Yield: 0.21 g (53%). Diffraction-quality crystals were grown from a saturated pentane solution at -30°C . ^1H NMR (C_6D_6 , 299.9 MHz, 293 K): 7.26 (2 H, app. t, app. $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.9$ Hz, 3- C_6H_5), 7.01 (2 H, d, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.1$ Hz, 2- C_6H_5), 6.84 (1 H, app. t, app. $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.9$ Hz, 4- C_6H_5), 6.30 (1 H, s, $\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2$), 6.03 (2 H, s, $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 5.24 (2 H, sept, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 2.7$ Hz, SiMe_2H), 1.59 (18 H, s, 3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 1.11 (18 H, s, 5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 0.38 (12 H, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 2.7$ Hz, SiHMe_2), -0.05 (6 H, s, SiMe_2). $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR (C_6D_6 , 75.4 MHz, 293 K): 165.5 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 156.8 (1- C_6H_5), 155.9 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 128.8 (3- C_6H_5), 126.4 (2- C_6H_5), 117.5 (4- C_6H_5), 104.7 (4- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$), 69.0 ($\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2$), 33.1 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 33.0 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 31.6 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 31.4 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}(\text{CMe}_3)_2$), 3.7 (SiHMe_2), 0.4 (SiMe_2). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol, cm^{-1}): 2854 (s), 2058 (m), 1586 (w), 1261 (w), 1093 (s), 976 (w), 886 (m), 759 (w). EI-MS: m/z 676 [$\text{M} - \text{Mg}\{\text{N}(\text{SiHMe}_2)_2\} - \text{NPh}\}^+$ (20%). Anal. found (calcd for $\text{C}_{35}\text{H}_{64}\text{MgN}_6\text{Si}_3$): C, 62.0 (62.1); H, 9.6 (9.5); N, 12.4 (12.4)%.

$\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NR}\}\{\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2\}$ ($\text{R} = \text{'Pr}$ (17), 'Bu (18), Ph (19)) illustrated for $\text{R} = \text{'Pr}$ (17). To a stirred solution of $\text{Mg}\{\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2\}_2$ (0.480 g, 1.41 mmol) in benzene (20 mL), was added a solution of $\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Ph}$ (0.500 g, 1.41 mmol) in benzene (20 mL). The resultant yellow solution was stirred for 14 h. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure, the solid washed with cold pentane (3×5 mL, -78°C) and dried under reduced pressure to afford complex **17** as a pale-orange solid. Yield = 0.58 g (77%). Diffraction-quality crystals were grown from slow diffusion of diethyl ether into a concentrated toluene solution. ^1H NMR (C_6D_6 , 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 7.30 (2 H, t, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.6$ Hz, 3- C_6H_5), 6.98 (2 H, d, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.5$ Hz, 2- C_6H_5), 6.83 (1 H, t, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.2$ Hz, 4- C_6H_5), 5.37 (2 H, s, $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 4.99 (1 H, s, $\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2$), 2.42 (6 H, s, 3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 1.49 (6 H, s, 5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 0.41 (18 H, s, $\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2$), -0.13 (SiMe). $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR (C_6D_6 , 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 157.0 (1- C_6H_5), 150.6 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 140.0 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 129.2 (3- C_6H_5), 125.3 (2- C_6H_5), 117.0 (4- C_6H_5), 106.2 (4- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 62.9 ($\text{HC}(\text{Me}_2\text{pz})_2$), 14.1 (3- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 10.4 (5- $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{HMe}_2$), 6.3 ($\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2$), -1.1 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm^{-1}): 2972 (w), 2728 (m), 1581 (s), 1521 (s), 1419 (m), 1377 (s), 1312 (s), 1243 (s), 1172 (m), 1096 (s), 1005 (s), 959 (m), 882 (m), 826 (s), 773 (m). EI-MS: $m/z = 536$ (40%) [$\text{M}]^+$, 376 (85%) [$\text{M} - \text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2$] $^+$. Anal. found (calcd for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{44}\text{MgN}_6\text{Si}_3$): C, 55.8 (55.9); H, 8.3 (8.3); N, 15.6 (15.7)%.

$\text{Mg}\{\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{NPh}\}\{\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2\}$ (20**).** To a solution of $\text{Mg}\{\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2\}_2$ (0.300 g, 0.87 mmol) in benzene (15 mL) was added slowly $\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2\text{SiMe}_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Ph}$ (0.45 g, 0.87 mmol) in benzene (15 mL). The mixture was heated to 60°C and stirred for 6 h. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure to give a pale-yellow solid. Recrystallisation from a saturated pentane solution at -30°C yielded complex **20** as an analytically pure, off-white solid. Yield: 0.30 g (49%). ^1H NMR (C_6D_6 , 299.9 MHz, 293 K): 7.24 (2 H, app. t, app. $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.9$ Hz, 3- C_6H_5), 6.98 (2 H, d, $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.1$ Hz, 2- C_6H_5), 6.83 (1 H, app. t, app. $^3J_{\text{HH}} = 7.9$ Hz, 4- C_6H_5), 6.21 (1 H, s, $\text{HC}(\text{Bu}_2\text{pz})_2$), 6.05 (2 H, s, $\text{N}_2\text{C}_3\text{H}^t\text{Bu}_2$),



1.61 (18 H, s, 3-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 1.07 (18 H, s, 5-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 0.36 (18 H, SiMe₃), -0.08 (6 H, s, SiMe₂). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): 165.4 (3-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 156.8 (1-C₆H₅), 156.3 (5-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 128.4 (3-C₆H₅), 126.9 (2-C₆H₅), 118.0 (4-C₆H₅), 104.8 (4-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 68.5 (HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂), 32.8 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 32.6 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 31.4 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 31.2 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 6.1 (SiMe₃), 0.2 (SiMe₂). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol, cm⁻¹): 2726 (s), 2670 (m), 1589 (w), 1549 (w), 1196 (w), 1167 (w), 1067 (s), 951 (w), 837 (m). Anal. found (calcd for C₃₇H₆₈MgN₆Si₃): C, 59.1 (63.0); H, 9.2 (9.7); N, 11.2 (11.9)%. This was the best of several attempts using recrystallised material.

Ca{HC(Me₂p_z)₂SiMe₂NR}{N(SiMe₃)₂}(thf) (R = ⁱPr (21), ^tBu (22), Ph (23)) illustrated for R = Ph (23). To a stirred solution of Ca{N(SiMe₃)₂}(thf)₂ (0.710 g, 1.41 mmol) in benzene (20 mL), was added a solution of HC(Me₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)Ph (0.500 g, 1.41 mmol) in benzene (20 mL). The resultant dark orange solution was stirred for 12 h. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure, the solid washed with cold pentane (3 × 5 mL, -78 °C) and dried under reduced pressure to afford complex 23 as a brown solid. Yield = 0.65 g (74%). ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 7.27 (2 H, t, ³J_{HH} = 7.6 Hz, 3-C₆H₅), 6.87 (2 H, app. d, app. ³J_{HH} = 7.8 Hz, 2-C₆H₅), 6.71 (1 H, app. t, app. ³J_{HH} = 7.6 Hz, 4-C₆H₅), 5.45 (2 H, s, N₂C₃HMe₂), 5.20 (1 H, s, HC(Me₂p_z)₂), 3.74 (4 H, br s, OCH₂CH₂), 2.38 (6 H, s, 3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 1.72 (6 H, s, 5-N₂C₃HMe₂), 1.34 (4 H, br s, OCH₂CH₂), 0.45 (18 H, s, N(SiMe₃)₂), 0.07 (SiMe). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 158.8 (1-C₆H₅), 150.2 (3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 139.9 (5-N₂C₃HMe₂), 129.2 (3-C₆H₅), 121.7 (2-C₆H₅), 113.9 (4-C₆H₅), 106.4 (4-N₂C₃HMe₂), 68.7 (OCH₂CH₂), 64.7 (HC(Me₂p_z)₂), 25.4 (OCH₂CH₂), 14.4 (3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 11.0 (5-N₂C₃HMe₂), 6.0 (N(SiMe₃)₂), 2.9 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm⁻¹): 2854 (w), 2361 (m), 1576 (s), 1521 (s), 1496 (w), 1458 (s), 1377 (s), 1259 (m), 1019 (m), 975 (m), 881 (m), 837 (w), 722 (s), 667 (m). EI-MS: *m/z* = 460 (25%) [M - NPh(thf)]⁺. Anal. found (calcd for C₂₉H₅₁CaN₆O₂Si₃): C, 55.7 (55.8); H, 8.2 (8.2); N, 13.4 (13.5)%.

Ca{HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂NPh}{N(SiMe₃)₂} (24). To a stirred solution of Ca{N(SiMe₃)₂}(thf)₂ (0.48 g, 0.96 mmol) in benzene (20 mL), was added a solution of HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)Ph (0.50 g, 0.96 mmol) in benzene (20 mL). The resultant orange solution was stirred at 60 °C for 8 h. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure, the solid washed with cold pentane (3 × 5 mL, -78 °C) and dried under reduced pressure to afford complex 24 as a pale-yellow solid. Yield = 0.41 g (60%). ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 7.25 (2 H, t, ³J_{HH} = 7.6 Hz, 3-C₆H₅), 6.79–6.76 (3 H, overlapping t and d, ³J_{HH} = 7.9 Hz and ³J_{HH} = 7.1 Hz, 4-C₆H₅ and 2-C₆H₅), 6.27 (1 H, s, HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂), 5.99 (2 H, s, N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 1.44 (18 H, s, 3-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 1.17 (18 H, s, 5-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 0.28 (18 H, s, N(SiMe₃)₂), 0.03 (6 H, s, SiMe). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 164.1 (3-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 157.1 (1-C₆H₅), 156.6 (5-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 129.6 (3-C₆H₅), 125.3 (2-C₆H₅), 116.7 (4-C₆H₅), 103.9 (4-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 71.1 (HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂), 33.3 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 32.8 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 31.8 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 30.9 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 5.8 (N(SiMe₃)₂), 1.4 (SiMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm⁻¹):

1584 (w), 1549 (w), 1533 (w), 1364 (m), 1197 (w), 1171 (w), 1046 (s), 995 (w), 955 (m), 879 (m), 703 (w), 589 (w). EI-MS: *m/z* = 429 (40%) [HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂]⁺. Anal. found (calcd for C₃₇H₆₈CaN₆Si₃): C, 61.6 (61.6); H, 9.4 (9.5); N, 11.7 (11.7)%.

Zn{HC(Me₂p_z)₂SiMe₂NR}Me (R = ⁱPr (25), ^tBu (26), Ph (27)) illustrated for R = Ph (27). To a stirred solution of HC(Me₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)Ph (0.500 g, 1.41 mmol) in benzene (30 mL), was added ZnMe₂ (2.11 mL, 4.23 mmol; 2.0 M in toluene). The resultant light yellow solution was stirred for 15 h. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure, the solid washed with cold hexanes (3 × 5 mL, -78 °C) and dried under reduced pressure to afford complex 27 as a white solid. Yield = 0.52 g (85%). Diffraction-quality crystals were grown from slow diffusion of diethyl ether into a concentrated toluene solution. ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 7.40–7.31 (4 H, overlapping 2 × m, 3-C₆H₅ and 2-C₆H₅), 6.81 (1 H, m, 4-C₆H₅), 5.23 (2 H, s, N₂C₃HMe₂), 5.00 (1 H, s, HC(Me₂p_z)₂), 1.97 (6 H, s, 3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 1.51 (6 H, s, 5-N₂C₃HMe₂), 0.13 (3 H, s, ZnMe), 0.01 (6 H, s, SiMe). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 163.6 (1-C₆H₅), 149.4 (3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 138.5 (5-N₂C₃HMe₂), 129.4 (3-C₆H₅), 121.1 (2-C₆H₅), 115.1 (4-C₆H₅), 105.7 (4-N₂C₃HMe₂), 62.8 (HC(Me₂p_z)₂), 12.8 (3-N₂C₃HMe₂), 10.3 (5-N₂C₃HMe₂), -1.5 (SiMe), -9.8 (ZnMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm⁻¹): 2923 (w), 2360 (m), 1576 (s), 1521 (w), 1489 (w), 1457 (s), 1376 (s), 1313 (w), 1290 (s), 1248 (m), 1141 (w), 991 (w), 949 (s), 853 (w), 835 (m), 771 (m), 722 (w). EI-MS: *m/z* = 431 (100%) [M]⁺, 416 (20%) [M - Me]⁺. Anal. found (calcd for C₂₀H₂₉N₅SiZn): C, 55.4 (55.5); H, 6.8 (6.8); N, 16.1 (16.2)%.

Zn{HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂NPh}Me (28). To a stirred solution of HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂N(H)Ph (0.50 g, 0.96 mmol) in benzene (30 mL), was added ZnMe₂ (1.44 mL, 2.88 mmol; 2.0 M in toluene). The resultant clear, colourless solution was stirred at 60 °C for 3 days. Volatiles were removed under reduced pressure, the solid washed with cold hexanes (3 × 5 mL, -78 °C) and dried under reduced pressure to afford complex 28 as a colourless solid. Yield = 0.41 g (72%). Diffraction-quality crystals were grown from a pentane solution. ¹H NMR (C₆D₆, 299.9 MHz, 293 K): δ 7.32–7.23 (4 H, overlapping 2 × m, 3-C₆H₅ and 2-C₆H₅), 6.79 (1 H, tt, ³J_{HH} = 6.5 Hz and ⁴J_{HH} = 1.9 Hz, 4-C₆H₅), 6.5 (1 H, s, HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂), 6.01 (2 H, s, N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 1.45 (18 H, s, 3-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 1.12 (18 H, s, 5-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 0.41 (3 H, s, ZnMe), 0.18 (6 H, s, SiMe). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (C₆D₆, 75.4 MHz, 293 K): δ 162.9 (3-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 157.0 (1-C₆H₅), 153.1 (5-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 129.1 (3-C₆H₅), 123.0 (2-C₆H₅), 115.8 (4-C₆H₅), 103.2 (4-N₂C₃H^tBu₂), 68.5 (HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂), 32.9 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 32.3 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 31.6 (3-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 30.6 (5-N₂C₃H(CMe₃)₂), 0.0 (SiMe), -3.4 (ZnMe). IR (NaCl plates, Nujol mull, cm⁻¹): 3143 (w), 3060 (w), 1588 (s), 1557 (m), 1542 (m), 1528 (s), 1489 (s), 1396 (w), 1364 (m), 1357 (m), 1291 (s), 1211 (m), 1178 (w), 1169 (m), 1152 (w), 1130 (w), 1075 (w), 1060 (m), 1023 (m), 993 (m), 961 (s), 867 (w), 843 (s), 793 (m), 765 (m), 751 (m), 709 (w), 692 (m). EI-MS: *m/z* = 429 (100%) [HC(^tBu₂p_z)₂SiMe₂]⁺. Anal. found (calcd for C₃₂H₅₃N₅SiZn): C, 63.8 (63.9); H, 8.8 (8.9); N, 11.6 (11.7)%.



Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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