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Digest paper Recent progress in the chemistry of lanthanide-ligand multiple bonds

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ABSTRACT

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Introduction

Chemical bonding is the cornerstone of chemistry. In the past few decades, transition metal complexes containing metal-ligand multiple bonds have received increasing attention due to their extensive applications in synthetic chemistry and small-molecule activation.^{1–3} Significant progress has been made in the chemistry of transition metal-ligand multiple bonds, especially for transition metal carbene complexes, which have revolutionized organic synthesis, culminating in the 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry.⁴

In addition, a large number of metal-ligand multiple bonds involving the actinide elements,⁵ as well as scandium and yttrium,⁶ have been investigated. However, in comparison, examples of welldefined lanthanide-ligand multiple bonds lag far behind.

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In principle, the 4f electrons in lanthanoid metals lie deep inside the electron shell, and as a result rarely participate in multiple bonding. Moreover, the bonding of lanthanides is principally ionic and highly polarized in nature. Therefore, the synthesis and stabilization of molecules containing lanthanide-ligand multiple bonds is a challenge.

In the past few years, organometallic chemists have made great developments in lanthanide chemistry,⁷ especially in the chemistry of lanthanide-ligand multiple bonds. Some elegant examples of lanthanide-ligand multiple bonds in carbene (M=C), imido (M=N), and oxo (M=O) complexes have been reported. In this review, we will focus on the synthesis and reactivity of these novel complexes. However, NHC-type lanthanide carbene adducts are not included in this short review.⁸

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Metal-ligand multiple bonds have received significant attention in the past few decades. A series of novel species with lanthanide-ligand multiple bonds have recently been isolated. This short review summarizes the synthesis and reactivity of these novel complexes.

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Lanthanide-carbon multiple bonds

Transition metal carbene complexes, which contain a metalcarbon double bond, are well-known as key intermediates in alkene metathesis. Back-donation from the metal to the carbon is important in the formation of metal-carbon double bonds. The back-donation effect is more common in the d-block transition metals compared with the f-block lanthanide metals. Therefore, metal-carbene complexes with d-block transition metals have been widely investigated. In contrast, for lanthanide metals, there are very limited examples of carbene complexes.

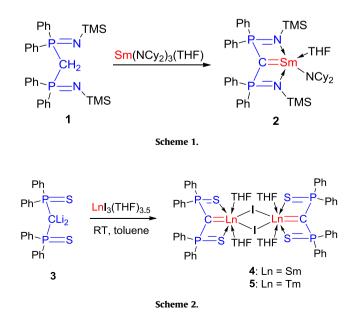
In 2000, Cavell and co-workers reported the synthesis of a samarium carbene complex by the double deprotonation of the bis(iminophosphorano)methane ligand.⁹ As shown in Scheme 1, after treatment of the NCN-pincer type ligand 1 with samarium tris(dicyclohexylamide), the Sm-carbene complex 2 was isolated as a yellow solid. This was the first example of a lanthanide metal-carbon double bond with a dianionic carbene ligand. The bis(iminophosphorano)methane ligand is an useful precursor for the synthesis of lanthanide-carbene complexes, probably due to the bulky TMS group on the nitrogen atom and electron-rich nature of this ligand.

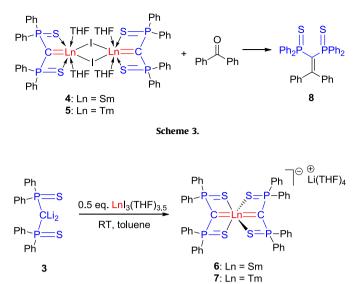
X-ray study showed that the Sm-carbon bond distance was shorter than the analogous distances in other neutral carbene ligand complexes of samarium. Based on this fact, as well as the P-N bond distances in the fused four-membered rings, the authors suggested that complex **2** has a delocalized structure.

Floch, Nief, Mézailles, and co-workers used the SCS-pincer type dianionic ligand **3** to synthesize samarium and thulium carbene complexes.¹⁰ By the reaction of SmI₃(THF)_{3.5} or TmI₃(THF)_{3.5} with one equivalent of dianionic ligand **3**, the lanthanide-carbene complexes **4** and **5** were generated, respectively (Scheme 2). Complex **5** represents the first late-lanthanide alkylidene complex.

The Ln=C double bond in these species showed nucleophilic character similar to the Schrock-type transition metal carbene complexes. After treatment of complex **4** or **5** with benzophenone, the Wittig-like reaction product **8** was formed (Scheme 3). This result shows that the electronic characters of early- and late-lan-thanide carbenes are similar.

Interestingly, treatment of $SmI_3(THF)_{3.5}$ or $TmI_3(THF)_{3.5}$ with two equivalents of dianionic ligand **3** led to the formation of the first homoleptic samarium and thulium carbene complexes **6** and **7**, which contain two Ln=C bonds (Scheme 4).

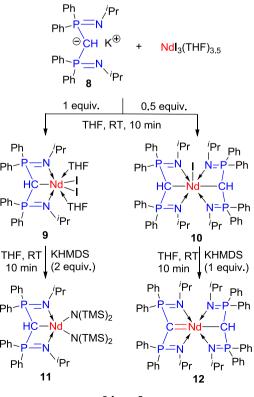




Therefore, the use of different ratios of the ligand and the metal will lead to the formation of different products. Floch and co-workers found that treatment of monoanionic ligand **8** with [Ndl₃(-THF)_{3.5}] in a 1:1 ratio enabled the synthesis of the neodymium iodide complex **9** (Scheme 5), whereas a 2:1 ligand: metal ratio yielded bisalkyl neodymium complex **10**.¹¹ The first lanthanide alkyl-carbene mixed complex **12** was formed by treating one equivalent of KHMDS with **10** in THF, whereas the reaction of two equivalents of KHMDS with complex **9** afforded the new alkyl neodymium complex **11**.

Scheme 4

The monoanionic NCN-type pincer ligand **13** was also found to react with $Lal_3(THF)_4$ to yield the alkyl lanthanum complex **14**



Scheme 5.

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