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# Ruthenium(II) $\eta^6$ -arene complexes containing a dinucleating ligand based on 1,8-naphthyridine



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#### ABSTRACT

Ruthenium arene complexes,  $[(\eta^6\text{-}p\text{-}\text{cymene})_2\text{Ru}_2(L)\text{Cl}_2](\text{PF}_6)_2$  [**3b**, L=2, 7-bis(di-2-pyridinyl)-1,8-naphthyridine] and  $[(\eta^6\text{-}p\text{-}\text{cymene})\text{Ru}(L')\text{Cl}](\text{PF}_6)$  [**4**, L'=tri(2-pyridinyl)amine], were synthesized and characterized by spectroscopic and analytical techniques. The molecular structure of  $[(\eta^6\text{-}p\text{-}\text{cymene})\text{2Ru}_2(L)\text{Cl}_2]\text{Cl}_2$  (**3a**) was further determined by single-crystal X-ray analysis. The use of these ruthenium complexes as pre-catalysts for oxidative coupling of 1,2-diols/1,2-aminoalcohol with o-phenylenediamines leading to quinoxalines was investigated. Complex **3b** appeared to be a good catalyst for this transformation.

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#### Introduction

Extensive efforts to prepare dimetallic complexes have appeared due to the interests in the study of synergistic effect between metal ions [1-22]. Thus the design of ligands for accommodation of two metal centers in close proximity plays a key role for such dimetallic species. In this regard, an incorporation of a bridging carboxylate into multidentate ligands, providing a coordination environment for the metal-metal interaction, is frequently encountered in the ligand design [23]. In order to modify the donating ability, other bridging donors are also developed. Analogous to carboxylate, the 1,8-naphthyridine moiety is considered as a "masked carboxylate", in which the two nitrogen donors are capable to bind two metal ions in a syn, syn-coordination mode, providing a coordination environment for the metal-metal interaction (chart 1). The advantage with 1,8-naphthyridine as a bridging ligand is the feasible synthetic approaches to construct pendant arms at 2 and 7 positions of the molecule leading to the dinucleating ligands. Quite a few 1,8-naphthyridine based multidentates have been reported (Scheme 1) and the naphthyridine moiety does act a bridging ligand to assist the metal-metal interaction [24–39]. In this work, we would like to report the synthesis of the naphthyridine-based poly-pyridine 1 and its coordination

chemistry toward [ $(\eta^6$ -cymene)RuCl<sub>2</sub>]<sub>2</sub>. The uniqueness of **1** is that its structure could be taken as a fused system of two molecules of tris(2-pyridyl)amine (**TPN**).

#### Results and discussion

Synthesis and characterization of Ruthenium(II) complexes

The key step of the ligand synthesis is the C–N bond formation between chloro-substituted 1,8-naphthyridine ( $\mathbf{2}$ ) and dipyridinylamine as shown in Scheme 2. The precursor  $\mathbf{2}$  can be prepared in good yield from the condensation of 2,6-diaminopyridine with malic acid followed by diazotization, hydrolysis and chlorination, as previously reported [40]. Cross coupling of  $\mathbf{2}$  with dipyridinylamine catalyzed by Pd(II) in the presence of  $C_{\mathbf{2}}CO_{\mathbf{3}}$  proceeded smoothly to give the desired ligand  $\mathbf{1}$  in 68% isolated yield.

Ligand **1** has been fully characterized by mass,  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectroscopy (Table 1). ESI-HRMS of **1** shows m/z at 469.1893, corresponding to the composition of  $\text{C}_{28}\text{H}_{21}\text{N}_8$  [M + H], which confirms the molecular formula. The  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum for **1** exhibited signals corresponding to the naphthyridine ring C–H protons which appear as two sets of doublet at  $\delta$  7.87 and 7.03 with J=8.8 Hz. The pyridinyl protons showed four sets of well-resolved signals in the aromatic region (Table 1). The  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectrum showed ten signals in the range of  $\delta$  158.4–116.3, typical for sp<sup>2</sup> carbon shifts, consistent with the proposed structures. These NMR data support the structure of **1** with no ambiguity.

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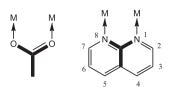


Chart 1. Coordination modes of Carboxylate and naphthyridine.

#### Preparation of $\eta^6$ -arene Ru(II) complexes

Complexation of **1** with arene-ruthenium(II) was investigated. Reaction of **1** with  $[(\eta^6\text{-benzene})\text{RuCl}_2]_2$  in a refluxing acetonitrile solution for 12 h gave the desired complex **3a** as a dark brown solid (Eqn. (1)). Further anion metathesis of **3a** with potassium hexafluorophosphate gave **3b** as a black solid in 91% yield. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR resonances of naphthyridinyl and pyridinyl protons in complex **3b** appeared as two sets of doublets and four sets of signals (Table 1), indicating a symmetrical structure in **3b**. All <sup>1</sup>H NMR signals were de-shielded in relation to the free ligands due to the coordination

chemical shifts. Two sets of doublets at  $\delta$  5.64 and 5.22 were assigned to be the aryl protons of  $\pi$ -coordinating cymene, which is in agreement with the related species [41]. Crystal structure of **3a** confirms the molecular formulation of the complex.

The solubility of  $\bf 3b$  in organic solvents such  $CH_2Cl_2$  or  $CHCl_3$  is much better than that of  $\bf 3a$ . However, suitable crystals of  $\bf 3a$  ( $CHCl_3$ ) ( $5H_2O$ ) for X-ray analysis were grown by slow evaporation from a wet chloroform solution. Some key bond distances and angles are summarized in Table 2, while ORTEP plot for cationic part of  $\bf 3a$  is illustrated in Fig. 1. As expected from the spectroscopic analysis of  $\bf 3$ , both metal centers are in the same coordinated mode with the metal center being coordinated by a cymene ring, a

**Scheme 1.** Naphthyridine-based Multidentates.

**Scheme 2.** Preparation of ligand **1**.

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