

Synthesis, solid state and solution structures of two isomeric dicopper(II) complexes with functionalized azetidine ligands

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Abstract Reported are the crystal and solution structures (determined by X-ray crystallography and EPR spectroscopy/simulation of the EPR spectra, respectively) of two dinuclear Cu^{II} complexes, coordinated to isomeric dinucleating azetidine-based ligands, whose N₃ cavities (pyridine/azetidine/secondary amine) are bridged by para- or meta-substituted phenyl groups. The Cu^{II} sites in the two dinuclear systems are similar to each other and as expected from the known structure of the corresponding mononuclear complex. The significant differences between the crystal structures of the mono- and the two dinuclear complexes and between the crystal and the solution structures are due to the elasticity of the Cu^{II} coordination sphere, the flexibility of the dinucleating ligands and subtle changes related to weak interactions (crystal lattice, solvation, anion coordination/ion pairing).

We dedicate this publication to Profs. Jack Harrowfield and Jacques Vicens in celebration of their 65th birthdays.

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Keywords Dinucleating ligands · Dicopper (II) complexes · Solution structure · EPR spectroscopy · X-ray crystallography

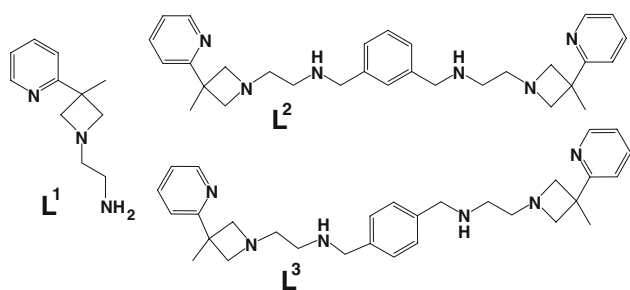
Introduction

The functionalization of *N*-aminoethyl azetidines has been shown to yield chelate ligands for various transition metal ions with interesting steric and electronic properties [1, 2]. Complexes of *N*-aminoethyl azetidine derivatives have, in comparison with those of primary amines, shorter metal-N (azetidine) bonds than might have been expected [3], that is, azetidine nitrogens are relatively strong σ -donor ligands [4, 5]. In addition they cannot be oxidized to the corresponding imines, and this adds to the redox stability of the corresponding complexes. The tridentate N₃ ligand L¹ was shown to readily coordinate to Cu^{II} with the formation of both mono- and dinuclear complexes [1]. We now report the synthesis and Cu^{II} coordination chemistry of the two related dinucleating bis-tridentate azetidine ligands L² and L³ (see Scheme 1) and analyze their solid state and solution structures in comparison with the mononuclear complex.

Results and discussion

The two dinucleating ligand L² and L³ are obtained in good yield by condensation of the two isomeric phthalaldehydes with the tridentate azetidine ligand L¹ and subsequent NaBH₄ reduction of the Schiff base ligands.

Reaction of the isophthalaldehyde-bridged ligand L² with CuCl₂·2H₂O in ethanol yields the blue crystalline complex [(Cl)₂Cu(L²)Cu(Cl)(OH)]·H₂O (**1**), whose infrared spectra confirm the presence of OH and NH stretching



Scheme 1 Ligand structures

bands. The X-ray structure (see Fig. 1; Table 1) shows that **1** is an unsymmetrical dicopper (II) complex. The Cu(1) site exhibits a distorted square pyramidal coordination geometry, with an N_3Cl_2 donor set. The N_3Cl donor set with Cl(1) defines the basal plane with Cl(2) as the axial ligand (Cu(1)–Cl(2) = 2.456 vs. 2.316 Å); the relatively small difference between axial and equatorial Cu–Cl distance is as expected from the considerable distortion towards a trigonal bipyramidal geometry, $\tau = 0.54$; $\tau = 0$ vs. 1 for square planar and trigonal bipyramidal, respectively [6]. The Cu(2) site also is five-coordinate. There is a rather short bond to an in-plane coordinated chloride *trans* to the azetidine nitrogen (Cu(2)–Cl(3) = 2.297 Å) and an elongated bond to an axial water (Cu(2)–O = 2.478 Å, $\tau = 0.43$). Interestingly, the related mononuclear complex [(L¹)Cu(Cl)₂] [1] also adopts a five-coordinate geometry with an N_3Cl_2 donor set similar to that around Cu(1) but with a coordination geometry closer to trigonal bipyramidal ($\tau = 0.79$, see Table 1).

Reaction of the terephthalaldehyde-bridged ligand L³ with CuCl₂·2H₂O in ethanol and, in contrast to the preparation of the complex with L², in presence of an excess of LiClO₄, in order to obtain better crystals, yields the blue crystalline complex [(Cl)(OH₂)Cu₂L³(OH₂)Cl](CH₃OH)(ClO₄)₂ (**2**), whose infrared spectrum confirms the presence of OH, NH and ClO₄ stretching bands. The crystal structure (see Fig. 2; Table 1) confirms two symmetry related (identical) Cu^{II} centers, best described as distorted square pyramidal ($\tau = 0.38$). The basal plane is defined by the three nitrogen donors of L³ and a chloro ligand (Cl(1)),

with a water molecule at the axial position. The varying degrees of trigonal distortion in the two structures of the dinuclear (L², L³) and in the mononuclear complex (L¹) indicate that the coordination geometry is, as expected for Cu^{II}, rather elastic, and the observed energy minimum structures are largely enforced by crystal lattice effects. Obviously, these depend on the molecular structures, and these are related to the two configurations of the dinucleating ligand (L² versus L³).

Weakly dipole–dipole-coupled paramagnetic centers exhibit, due to the coupling of each of the electron spins with both centers relatively complex EPR spectra. Specifically those of dicopper (II) systems with two $S = 1/2$ Cu^{II} ions and $I_{Cu} = 3/2$ have been studied extensively, and the simulation of the spectra has been used to deduce structural information [7]. Therefore, EPR spectroscopy in combination with spectra simulations and, where appropriate, various molecular modeling techniques have been used extensively to determine structures of di- and trinuclear Cu^{II} complexes in solution [8–12]. Since the molecular structures of the complexes **1** and **2** reported here are known in the solid, structure optimization was not thought to be required in the present study, and EPR spectroscopy/spectra simulations have been used to thoroughly analyze the solution structures in comparison with the known crystal structures. Figure 3 shows the experimental and simulated EPR spectra of the mononuclear complex of L¹ [1] and the two dicopper (II) complexes **1** and **2**, based on the isomeric ligands L² and L³; the spin Hamiltonian and structural parameters of the corresponding simulations are given in Table 3. The spectra of the solutions did not change with time, and it therefore appears that the relatively labile monodentate ligands (OH₂, OH[−], Cl[−]) are exchanged in solution (aqueous DMF, see Experimental) to yield common coordination spheres (presumably 2 OH₂ donors at each Cu^{II} center in addition to the tridentate chelate provided by the substituted azetidines). It was not expected that the spectra simulations yield various sets of *g*- and *A*-tensor parameters (see Table 2), and we interpret this as structural differences enforced by the two isomeric ligands rather than by different co-ligands. That is, in agreement with the observations due to the solid state structures (see above), there is a high elasticity of the Cu^{II}

Fig. 1 ORTEP plot of [(Cl)₂Cu(L²)Cu(Cl)(OH)]·H₂O (**1**). Displacement ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level. Carbon-bound hydrogen atoms and the solvent molecule are omitted for clarity

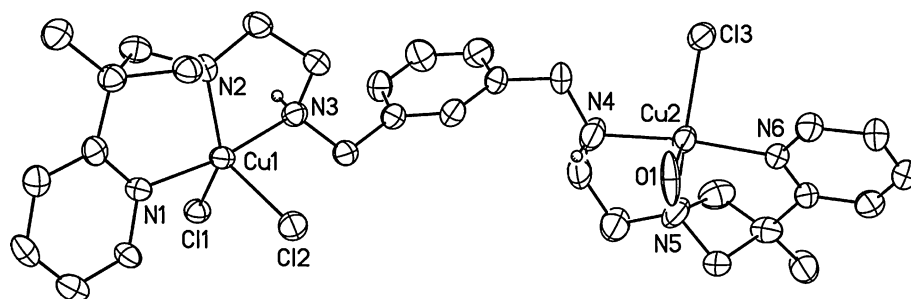


Table 1 Selected structural parameters (distances in Å, angles in °; τ describes the distortion towards a trigonal bipyramid [6])

	$[(L^1)Cu(Cl)_2]$ [1]	$[(L^2)Cu_2(Cl)_3(OH)]$ (1)	$[(L^3)Cu_2(Cl)_2(OH)_2]^{2+}$ (2)		
Cu–Npy	2.05	N(1,6)	2.054(5), 2.043(5)	Cu–N(1,1')	2.058(4)
Cu–Naz	2.04	N(2,5)	2.043(6), 2.041(7)	Cu–N(2,2')	2.006(5)
Cu–NH	2.01	N(3,4)	2.019(5), 2.048(6)	Cu–N(3,3')	2.019(5)
Cu–Cl	2.37, 2.40	Cl(1,3)	2.3161(17), 2.297(2)	Cu–Cl(1,1')	2.3103(14)
Cu–Cl	–	Cl(2)	2.4557(18)	–	–
Cu–OH ₍₂₎	–	O(1)	2.478(5)	Cu–O(1,1')	2.187(5)
Cu···Cu	–		10.07		11.46
Angle (α , β) [°] ^a	–		14, 20		0, 0
Npy–Cu–NH	171	N(3-1, 4-6)	172, 170	N(3-1)	170
Npy–Cu–Naz	88	N(2-1, 5-6)	89, 87	N(2-1)	88
NH–Cu–Naz	84	N(3-2, 4-5)	83, 84	N(3-2)	82
Cl–Cu–X	119	Cl ₁ –Cu ₁ –Cl ₂	110	Cl ₁ –Cu ₁ –O ₁	94
Cl–Cu–OH ₂	–	Cl ₃ –Cu ₂ –O ₁	109	Cl ₁ '–Cu ₁ '–O ₁ '	94
τ	0.79	Cu ₁ , Cu ₂	0.54, 0.43		0.38

^a α is the angle between the xy plane of Cu₁ and the line connecting Cu₁ and Cu₂, and β is the angle between the z axes of the two local coordinate systems around Cu₁ and Cu₂

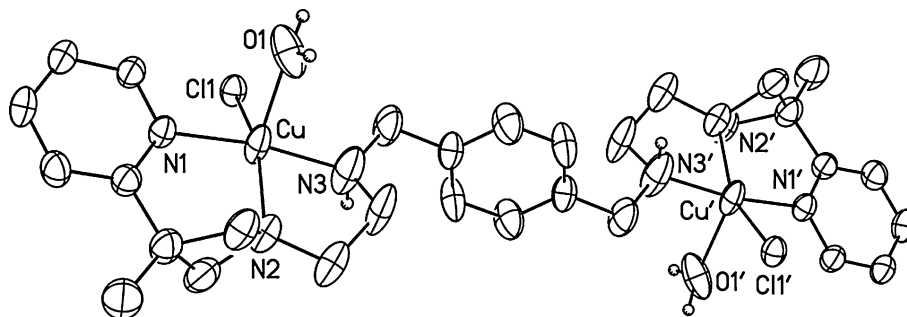


Fig. 2 ORTEP plot of $[(Cl)(OH_2)Cu_2(L^3)(OH_2)(Cl)](CH_3OH)(ClO_4)_2$ (2). Displacement ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level. Carbon-bound hydrogen atoms, counter ions and solvent molecules are omitted for clarity

sites with various close to degenerate minima, and subtle effects due to secondary interactions, enforced by the slightly different environment, caused by the different ligand configurations, lead to the stabilization of the observed minimum structures.

Also of interest is the observation that the structural parameters of both isomers are different from those observed in the crystals; this was expected since with distances of significantly larger than 10 Å, the two $S = 1/2$ centers are expected to behave as (nearly) independent centers. According to the spectra simulations, the copper–copper distances are shortened in both isomers by 1–2 Å (see Tables 1, 2). This indicates that there are some conformational changes for **1** and **2** when these complexes are dissolved, and this is also apparent from the angles used in the spectra simulations (see Table 2). Similar observations have been made in other systems before, and these suggest that intermolecular interactions in the crystal lattices as well as in solution are of importance [13].

Experimental

Materials and instrumentation

The tridentate ligand L^1 [2-(3-methyl-3-(pyridin-2-yl)azetidino-1-yl)ethanamine] was prepared as described previously [1]. For ion exchange chromatography the Na^+ form of SP Sephadex C-25 cation exchange resin was used. Reagents were purchased from Aldrich and used as purchased.

Electronic absorption spectra were measured with a SCINCO S-2100 diode array spectrophotometer. *IR spectra* (KBr pellets) were obtained with a JASCO 715 spectrometer. *¹H NMR spectra* (in $CDCl_3$) were recorded on a Bruker Advance Digital 400 instrument. *X-band EPR spectra* (approx. 9.4 GHz) were recorded on a Bruker ELEXSYS E500 EPR spectrometer, equipped with a Super High Q Cavity. The temperature was held at 120 K using a flow cryostat with liquid nitrogen and a Eurotherm

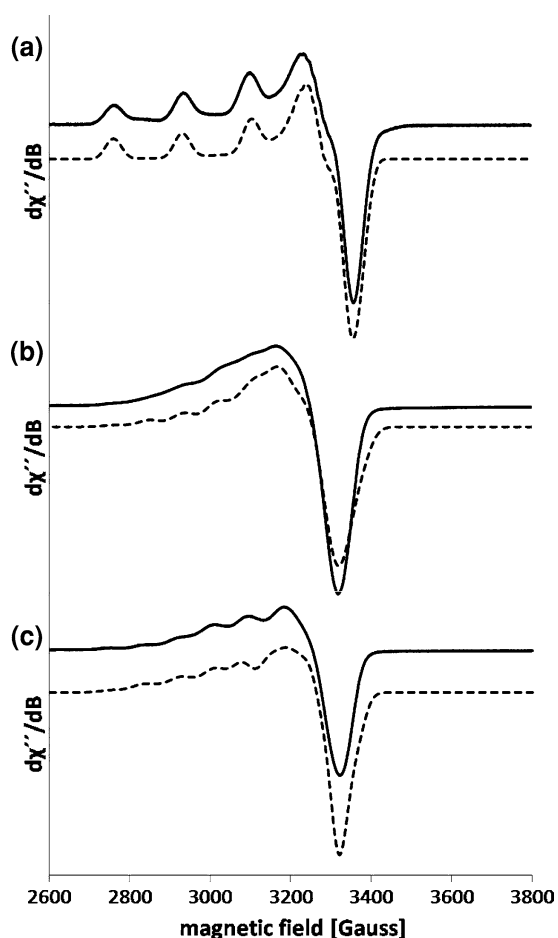


Fig. 3 Experimental (full line, ca. 0.5 mM in DMF/H₂O = 3:2, ca. 120 K) and simulated (dashed line) [14, 15] EPR spectra of **a** mononuclear [(L¹)Cu(Cl)₂] (9.434575 GHz), **b** dinuclear [(L²)Cu₂(Cl)₃(OH)] (9.437620 GHz), and **c** dinuclear [(L³)Cu₂(Cl)₂(OH)₂]²⁺ (9.437052 GHz)

(B-VT-2000) temperature controller. A 3:2 mixture of DMF and water was used as solvent in all cases. Visualization of the spectra was done with the programme package Xepr-XeprView (version 2.4b.12), and for simulation of the spectra the software package XSophe-Sophe-XEpr-View (version 1.1.4) and MoSophe (version 2.0.91) were

used [14, 15]. Elemental analyses, using a Vario EL elemental analysis apparatus (Elementar), were obtained from the microanalytical laboratories of the chemistry department of the University of Heidelberg.

Syntheses

[(Cl)₂(Cu(L²))Cu(Cl)(OH)]·H₂O (**1**)

Isophthalaldehyde (0.18 g) was added to L¹ (0.53 g) in absolute ethanol (50 mL) and the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 1 h then heated under nitrogen at 70 °C for 24 h. It was cooled to room temperature, evaporated under reduced pressure, and dissolved in methanol (100 mL), before cooling to ~5 °C in an ice bath. NaBH₄ (1.0 g) was gradually added with stirring. Stirring was continued overnight at room temperature, then 2 mol L⁻¹ HCl (10 mL) was added and stirring continued for a further 2 h. The solution was evaporated to dryness and 1 mol L⁻¹ NaOH (100 mL) was added. This mixture was extracted with chloroform (30 mL × 3), and the chloroform extracts were washed with water (50 mL × 3), dried with anhydrous Na₂SO₄, then evaporated under reduced pressure to give a light brown oil (0.60 g), L². The crude ligand (0.60 g) in methanol (50 mL) was mixed with CuCl₂·2H₂O (0.42 g) in methanol (30 mL), and the resulting homogeneous blue solution was evaporated to dryness. The residue was dissolved in water (200 mL), adsorbed onto SP Sephadex C-25 and eluted with 0.3 mol L⁻¹ NaCl. The major blue band eluate (followed by a minor green band) was evaporated to dryness. The complex was extracted into ethanol, leaving a residue of NaCl. Evaporation of the ethanol extract gave 0.60 g of a blue powder. Crystals suitable for a structure determination were obtained by slow recrystallization of an ethanolic solution of this product. Anal. Calcd. for C₃₀H₅₂Cl₄Cu₂N₆O₁₀: C, 38.93; H, 5.66; N, 9.08. Found: C, 38.68; H, 5.55; N, 9.09%. IR spectrum (KBr pellet/cm⁻¹): 3430 (OH), 3175 (NH) cm⁻¹. Electronic spectrum (in water): λ_{max} = 649.5 nm, log ε_{max} = 2.44.

Table 2 Spin Hamiltonian and structural parameters used for the simulation of the EPR spectra

	[(L ¹)Cu(Cl) ₂]	[(L ²)Cu ₂ (Cl) ₃ (OH)] (1)	[(L ³)Cu ₂ (Cl) ₂ (OH) ₂] ²⁺ (2)
g (x, y, z)	2.070, 2.038, 2.233	2.080, 2.041, 2.231	2.120, 2.052 (2.042), 2.231
A (x, y, z) [G]	17, 16, 179	22, 25, 175	12, 17, 181
Angle (α, β) [°] ^a	–	10, 30	0, 20
Cu–Cu [Å]	–	8.8	9.2
J [cm ⁻¹]	–	–0.50	–0.37

^a α and β are defined as in Table 1 except that here, these are the angles related to the g-tensors of Cu₁ and Cu₂; it appears that the g-tensor axes generally are approximately parallel to the structural Cartesian coordinate systems and the small deviations are generally neglected when simulated spectra are used to determine solution structures [8–12]

Table 3 Crystal data and structure refinement details

Compound	[(Cl ₂)Cu(L ²)Cu(Cl)(OH)]·H ₂ O (1)	[(Cl)(OH ₂)Cu ₂ (L ³)(OH ₂)(Cl)](CH ₃ OH)(ClO ₄) ₂ (2)
Chemical formula	C ₃₀ H ₄₃ Cl ₃ Cu ₂ N ₆ O ₂	C ₃₁ H ₄₈ Cl ₄ Cu ₂ N ₆ O ₁₁
<i>M</i> /g mol ⁻¹	753.13	949.63
Crystal system	Triclinic	Triclinic
Space group	<i>P</i> $\bar{1}$	<i>P</i> $\bar{1}$
<i>a</i> /Å	7.9713(4)	8.3331(5)
<i>b</i> /Å	12.4675(10)	10.4008(8)
<i>c</i> /Å	21.3127(18)	12.6238(11)
α /°	74.410(4)	69.250(4)
β /°	82.101(5)	77.667(5)
γ /°	74.395(4)	85.337(5)
<i>V</i> /Å ³	1,960.1(3)	999.52(13)
<i>D_c</i> /g cm ⁻³	1.276	1.578
<i>Z</i>	2	1
F(000)	780	490
μ (MoK α)/mm ⁻¹	1.321	1.394
<i>T</i> _{min,max}	0.734, 0.936	0.755, 0.894
<i>hkl</i> range	-9 ≤ <i>h</i> ≤ 9, -15 ≤ <i>k</i> ≤ 15, -25 ≤ <i>l</i> ≤ 25	-10 ≤ <i>h</i> ≤ 10, -12 ≤ <i>k</i> ≤ 12, -15 ≤ <i>l</i> ≤ 15
<i>N</i>	66,392	28,892
<i>N</i> _{ind} (<i>R</i> _{merge})	7,412 (0.047)	3,755 (0.028)
<i>N</i> _{obs} (<i>I</i> > 2σ(<i>I</i>))	5,795	3,257
<i>N</i> _{par}	390	254
<i>R</i> ₁ (<i>F</i>)	0.085	0.070
<i>wR</i> ₂ (<i>F</i> ²)	0.258	0.176
GoF(all)	1.064	1.091
$\Delta\rho_{\text{min}}$ /e Å ³	-0.62	-2.09
$\Delta\rho_{\text{max}}$ /e Å ³	1.81	1.92

[(Cl)(OH₂)Cu₂(L³)(OH₂)(Cl)](CH₃OH)(ClO₄)₂ (**2**)

Ligand L³ (yield, 0.62 g) and its Cu(II) complex were prepared similar to that described above for L² but using terephthalaldehyde. A fast-eluting major blue band (followed by a weak green band) was again separated by chromatography on SP Sephadex and treated as described above. Yield, 0.60 g. Crystals suitable for a structure determination were obtained by slow evaporation of a methanolic solution of the complex in presence of an excess of LiClO₄. Anal. Calcd. for C₃₂H₄₉Cl₃Cu₂N₆O₁₄: C, 39.41; H, 5.06; N, 8.62. Found: C, 39.58; H, 5.17; N, 8.77%. IR (KBr pellet/cm⁻¹): 3442 (br) (OH), 3176 (NH), ClO₄ 1094 (br). Visible spectrum (in water): $\lambda_{\text{max}} = 653.5$ nm, log $\epsilon_{\text{max}} = 2.47$.

Crystallography

The data were collected at 100(2) K on a Nonius Kappa-CCD area detector diffractometer [16] using graphite-monochromated Mo-K α radiation (λ 0.71073 Å). The crystals were introduced in glass capillaries with a

protecting “Paratone-N” oil (Hampton Research) coating. The unit cell parameters were determined from 10 frames, then refined on all data. The data (combinations of φ - and ω -scans giving complete data sets up to $\theta = 25.7^\circ$ and a minimum redundancy of 4 for 90% of the reflections) were processed with HKL2000 [17]. The structures were solved by direct methods (1) or Patterson map interpretation (2) with SHELXS-97 and subsequent Fourier-difference synthesis, and refined by full-matrix least-squares on *F*² with SHELXL-97 [18]. Absorption effects were corrected empirically with the program SCALEPACK [17]. All non-hydrogen atoms were refined with anisotropic displacement parameters. The carbon-bound hydrogen atoms were introduced at calculated positions and were treated (as well as the oxygen- and nitrogen-bound hydrogen atoms when found) as riding atoms with an isotropic displacement parameter equal to 1.2 (OH, NH, CH, CH₂) or 1.5 (CH₃) times that of the parent atom. Specific details are as follows:

Complex 1. The oxygen-bound hydrogen atoms were neither found, nor introduced, and the nitrogen-bound ones were introduced at calculated positions. Very large voids in

the lattice indicate the presence of unresolved solvent (probably water) molecules. The corresponding density has been taken into account with the program SQUEEZE in PLATON [19].

Complex 2. The solvent methanol molecule, being too close to its image by symmetry, has been given an occupancy parameter of 0.5. The oxygen- and nitrogen-bound hydrogen atoms were found on a Fourier-difference map, except for that of the solvent methanol molecule.

Crystal data and structure refinement details are given in Table 3, and selected bond lengths and angles are presented in Table 2. The molecular plots were drawn with SHELXTL [18]. CCDC-735333 (1) and 735334 (2) contain the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk.

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