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# Catalytic hydrogenation of C=O and C=N bonds via heterolysis of H<sub>2</sub> mediated by metal-sulfur bonds of rhodium and iridium thiolate complexes

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#### ABSTRACT

Coordinatively unsaturated rhodium and iridium complexes having a bulky thiolate,  $[Cp^{*}M(PMe_{3})(SDmp)](BAr_{F}^{F})$  (**1a**: M = Rh; **1b**: M = Ir; Dmp = 2,6-(mesityl)<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>, Ar<sup>F</sup> = 3,5-(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), catalyzed the hydrogenation of benzaldehyde, *N*-benzylideneaniline, and cyclohexanone, under 1 atm of H<sub>2</sub> at low temperatures. In these catalytic reactions, the M–H/S–H complexes  $[Cp^{*}M(PMe_{3})(H)(HSDmp)]$ -  $(BAr_{F}^{F})$  (**2a**: M = Rh; **2b**: M = Ir) generated via H<sub>2</sub> heterolysis by **1a** or **1b** were suggested to transfer both M–H hydride and S–H proton to substrates. The catalytic reactions were terminated by the dissociation of H-SDmp from the metal centers of **2a** and **2b** that occurs at ambient temperature under H<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. © 2009 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

#### 1. Introduction

Heterolytic cleavage of H<sub>2</sub> by transition metal complexes has been useful for catalytic hydrogenation of aldehydes, ketones, and imines [1,2]. A representative class of such hydrogenation catalysts is the ruthenium-amide complexes, in which both ruthenium and amide nitrogen atoms participate in the heterolysis of H<sub>2</sub> [3]. While these complexes efficiently activate H<sub>2</sub>, biological hydrogen activation is mediated by metal-thiolate complexes in hydrogenases. The active site of [NiFe] hydrogenase consists of a thiolate-bridged (carbonyl/cyano)iron-nickel complex [4], which has been postulated to use both metal and cysteinyl sulfur atoms in the reaction with H<sub>2</sub>. The recent studies on [NiFe] hydrogenase suggested that the nickel center is a plausible binding site of H<sub>2</sub>, and that a cysteinyl sulfur bound to nickel possibly accepts a proton generated from the heterolysis of  $H_2$  [5]. Thus the heterolysis of H<sub>2</sub> by [NiFe] hydrogenase may occur in a similar manner to that mediated by ruthenium-amide catalysts.

The unique function of metal-thiolate complex in [NiFe] hydrogenase prompted us to investigate into the structural and reaction models. As structural analogues of the active site of [NiFe] hydrogenase, we have synthesized a series of thiolate-bridged (CO/CN)Fe–Ni and (CO)<sub>3</sub>Fe–Ni complexes such as (PPh<sub>4</sub>)[(CN)<sub>2</sub>(CO)<sub>2</sub>-Fe( $\mu$ -pdt)Ni(S<sub>2</sub>CNEt<sub>2</sub>)] (pdt = 1,3-propanedithiolate) and (CO)<sub>3</sub>-

Fe( $\mu$ -S<sup>t</sup>Bu)<sub>3</sub>Ni{SC(NMe<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>}Br [6]. Also we have reported some metal–sulfur complexes as functional models, which are capable of splitting H<sub>2</sub> in a heterolytic manner [7]. For example, the half-sandwich rhodium and iridium complexes having a bulky SDmp thiolate (Dmp = 2,6-(mesityl)<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>) [8], [Cp<sup>\*</sup>M(PMe<sub>3</sub>)(SDmp)] (BAr<sup>F</sup><sub>4</sub>) (1a: M = Rh; 1b: M = Ir; Ar<sup>F</sup> = 3,5-(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), were found to promote the heterolysis of H<sub>2</sub> (1 atm) at low temperatures (-50 to -20 °C), giving rise to the M–H/S–H complexes [Cp<sup>\*</sup>M(PMe<sub>3</sub>)(H)(HSDmp)](BAr<sup>F</sup><sub>4</sub>) (2a: M = Rh; 2b: M = Ir) (Scheme 1) [7e]. Since complexes 2a and 2b contain a hydride (M–H) and a proton (S–H) derived from H<sub>2</sub>, we sensed that these reactions could be applied to catalytic hydrogenation reactions. Herein we report the hydrogenation of C=O and C=N groups of benzalde-hyde, *N*-benzylideneaniline, and cyclohexanone, catalyzed by 1a and 1b under 1 atm of H<sub>2</sub> at low temperatures.

#### 2. Results and discussion

Coordinatively unsaturated thiolate complexes **1a** and **1b** mediate the heterolysis of  $H_2$  under mild conditions. This is an advantage for catalytic reactions, because most of the precedent  $H_2$ heterolysis by thiolate complexes require rigorous conditions such as high-pressure of  $H_2$  and/or the presence of external protons [9], preventing their application to hydrogenation catalysts. Whereas the heterolysis of  $H_2$  by **1a** or **1b** proceeds under mild conditions, the resultant M–H/S–H complexes **2a** and **2b** were found to be unstable [7e]. The metal centers of **2a** and **2b** readily liberate H-SDmp under  $H_2$  atmosphere at room temperature, giving rise





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Scheme 1. Heterolysis of H<sub>2</sub> mediated by 1a and 1b.

to a complex mixture of rhodium-hydride species or a trihydride complex of iridium  $[Cp^{*}Ir(PMe_{3})(H)_{3}](BAr_{4}^{F})$  (**3**) (Scheme 1) [10]. Therefore, the following hydrogenation reactions were conducted at low temperatures. Anticipating that the M–H/S–H complexes **2a** and **2b** transfer both M–H and S–H hydrogen atoms to substrates, a stoichiometric reaction between **2a** and benzaldehyde was examined. Under a nitrogen atmosphere, one equiv of benzaldehyde was added to a  $CD_2Cl_2$  solution of **2a** at –50 °C. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of this reaction mixture revealed the regeneration of **1a** and the quantitative formation of benzylalcohol, completing formal turnover of the catalytic hydrogenation (Scheme 2).

Motivated by the stoichiometric reaction between **2a** and benzaldehyde, we set out the catalytic hydrogenation (Table 1). Exposure of H<sub>2</sub> (1 atm) to a CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> solution of benzaldehyde and catalytic amount of **1a** (2 mol%) at -50 °C resulted in the quantitative formation of benzylalcohol (entry 1). In contrast, a complex mixture of rhodium-hydride species, formed from **2a** and H<sub>2</sub> at room temperature, did not show any catalytic activity (entry 2), suggesting that the thermally unstable Rh–H/S–H complex **2a** is necessary for this catalytic reaction. The Rh–H/S–H hydrogen atoms in **2a** are transferred to benzaldehyde, possibly via formation of six-membered metallacycle consisting of Rh–H, S–H, and C=O groups (Scheme 3) as proposed for the hydrogenation mediated by the ruthenium–amide complexes [3]. While the rhodium complex **1a** serves as a good catalyst for hydrogenation of benzaldehyde, the iridium congener **1b** was found to be less active. Complex **1b** was almost inactive at -50 °C for hydrogenation of benzaldehyde (entry 3), because the H<sub>2</sub> activation by **1b** is very slow at this temperature. At -20 °C, complex **1b** showed some catalytic activity, whereas the longer reaction time was needed (entry 4). The hydrogenation reactions of *N*-benzylideneaniline and cyclohexanone were also attempted in a similar manner (entries 5–8), and the yields of *N*-phenylbenzylamine and cyclohexanol were 66% and 53% yields, respectively, in the presence of **1a** as the catalyst (entries 5 and 7). The lower catalytic activity of **1b** was also the case for the hydrogenation of these substrates. The yield of *N*-phenylbenzylamine was 15% by using **1b** as the catalyst (entry 6), and attempts for the hydrogenation of cyclohexanone by **1b** were unsuccessful (entry 8).

The lower catalytic activity of **1b** was not only because of slow  $H_2$  activation, but also due to side reactions. After the hydrogenation of cyclohexanone by **1b**, the catalytically inactive trihydride complex **3** and H-SDmp were formed. This result indicates the low reactivity of Ir–H/S–H complex **2b** toward cyclohexanone and the facile liberation of H-SDmp from **2b** in the presence of  $H_2$ . The side reaction found in the hydrogenation of benzaldehyde by **1b** was different, and the NMR spectrum indicated the formation of free H-SDmp and a phenyl carbonyl complex



Scheme 2. Proton/hydride transfer from 2a to benzaldehyde.

Table 1	
Hydrogenation reactions catalyzed by <b>1a</b> and <b>1b</b> . <sup>a</sup>	

Entry	Substrate	Catalyst	Temperature (°C)	Time (h)	Yield (%) <sup>b</sup>	Product
1	0	1a	-50	24	>98	OH
2		Rh-hydride <sup>c</sup>	-50	24	n.d. <sup>d</sup>	
3	ſĨ <sup>¬</sup>	1b	-50	24	<2	ſĨĬ Ĥ
4	$\sim$	1b	-20	48	15	$\sim$ "
5		1a	-50	24	66	
6		1b	-20	48	15	
7	$ \sim 0 $	1a	-50	24	53	A .OH
8	() <sup>2</sup>	1b	-20	48	n.d. <sup>d</sup>	$\bigcirc$

<sup>a</sup> Standard conditions: 2 mol% catalysts, 1 mL CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 1 atm H<sub>2</sub>.

 $^b$  Determined by  $^1H$  NMR with reference to the internal standard {(CH\_3)\_3Si}\_4Si (1 wt%).

 $^{\rm c}\,$  Obtained from the reaction of  $\boldsymbol{1a}$  with  $H_2$  (1 atm) at room temperature.

<sup>d</sup> Not detected.



Scheme 3. A possible mechanism for hydrogenation.



**Fig. 1.** Structure of the cationic part of  $[Cp^{-}Ir(PMe_3)(Ph)(CO)][BAr_4^F]$  (**4**) with thermal ellipsoids at the 50% probability level. All hydrogen atoms and  $BAr_4^F$  anion are omitted for clarity. Selected bond distances (Å) and angles (°): Ir–P 2.3084(18), Ir–C1 1.875(5), C1–O 1.132(6), Ir–C2 2.109(5), P–Ir–C1 89.1(2), C1–Ir–C2 89.3(2), C2–Ir–P 86.22(19).

 $[Cp^*Ir(PMe_3)(Ph)(CO)](BAr_4^F)$  (4), the structure of which was confirmed by an X-ray analysis (Fig. 1). The cationic part of 4 is known, and the OTf salt of 4 has been prepared from the reaction of Cp<sup>T</sup>Ir(PMe<sub>3</sub>)(Me)(OTf) with benzaldehyde [11]. Since this reaction is accompanied by the liberation of methane, benzaldehyde may be deprotonated by the Ir-Me groups to generate the Ir-C(O)Ph species. Similarly, the phenyl and carbonyl ligands in 4 are likely derived from benzaldehyde, and the formation of 4 may involve the deprotonation from benzaldehyde and the decarbonylation from the resultant Ir-C(O)Ph species. As the SDmp ligand in **1b** serves as a base for the heterolysis of H<sub>2</sub>, this ligand may deprotonate from benzaldehyde. Other possibilities involve the liberation of H-SDmp from 2b followed by deprotonation of benzaldehyde by Ir-H, or the protonation of the SDmp ligand in **1b** by benzylalcohol to generate an Ir-alkoxide species which may uptake a proton from benzaldehyde.

In summary, we have demonstrated the hydrogenation of benzaldehyde, *N*-benzylideneaniline, and cyclohexanone, catalyzed by coordinatively unsaturated rhodium and iridium complexes **1a** and **1b** under 1 atm of  $H_2$  at low temperatures. These reactions involve the heterolysis of  $H_2$  to form the M–H/S–H complexes **2a** and **2b**, which may transfer both M–H hydride and S–H proton to substrates in a concerted manner as proposed for the hydrogenation mediated by ruthenium–amide complexes (Scheme 3). Whereas the yields of *N*-phenylbenzylamine and cyclohexanol were not sufficient and the catalytic activity of **1b** was low, this study may suggest a new utility of the metal–sulfur bond in thiolate complexes.

#### 3. Experimental

#### 3.1. General procedures

All reactions and manipulations were performed under a nitrogen atmosphere using a glove box and standard Schlenk techniques. CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> was dried by CaH<sub>2</sub> and distilled prior to use. Hexane and CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> were purified by the method of Grubbs and coworkers [12], where the solvents were passed over columns of activated alumina and supported copper catalyst supplied by Hansen & Co. Ltd. The <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C $\{^{1}H\}$ , and  $\{^{31}P\{^{1}H\}$  NMR spectra were acquired on a JEOL ECA-600. The proton and carbon signals were referenced to the residual signals of CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>. The <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR chemical shifts are relative to the external reference of 85% H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>. Infrared spectrum was recorded on a JASCO FT/IR-410 spectrometer. ESI-MS spectrum was obtained from Micromass LCT TOF-MS spectrometer. Elemental analysis of 4 was recorded on a LECO-CHNS-932 elemental analyzer where the crystalline samples were sealed in silver capsules under nitrogen. X-ray diffraction data of 4 was collected on a Rigaku AFC8 equipped with a CCD area detector by using graphite-monochromated Mo K $\alpha$  radiation.

#### 3.2. Reaction of **2a** with 1 equiv. of benzaldehyde

A Schlenk tube with a stirring bar was charged with **1a** (30.4 mg, 0.02 mmol) and CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.6 mL with 1 wt% {(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>Si}<sub>4</sub>Si as the internal standard). After freeze–pump–thaw cycles, the tube was filled with 1 atm of H<sub>2</sub> at -80 °C, and the tube was kept at -50 °C with stirring. The color of solution changed from purple to green, indicating the dominant formation of **2a** (the yield of **2a** was 89% under a similar condition [7e]). The Schlenk tube was filled with N<sub>2</sub> after freeze–pump–thaw cycles, and one equiv of benzaldehyde (25 µL of 0.8 M CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> solution, 0.02 mmol) was added to this solution at -50 °C. The solution was stirred for 6 h under a N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. The color of the reaction mixture turned to purple, and the <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR revealed the conversion of benzaldehyde to benzylalcohol (>98%), regeneration of **1a** (86%), and the formation of decomposed rhodium-hydride species (14%) and H-SDmp (14%).

#### 3.3. General procedure for the catalytic hydrogenation

In a glove box, a Schlenk tube with a stirring bar was charged with **1a** or **1b** (0.02 mmol) and CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.5 mL, with {(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>Si}<sub>4</sub>Si as the internal standard). After freeze–pump–thaw cycles, the tube was filled with 1 atm of H<sub>2</sub> at  $-80 \degree C$  (**1a**) or  $-40 \degree C$  (**1b**), and substrate (1 mmol in 0.5 mL CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) was added under H<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. The reaction mixture was stirred at  $-50 \degree C$  (**1a**) or  $-20 \degree C$  (**1b**) under H<sub>2</sub>, and was warmed to room temperature after catalysis. The yields of the catalytic products were determined by the <sup>1</sup>H NMR.

The rhodium-hydride species used in Table 1.entry 2, was generated from the reaction of a CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.5 mL with  $\{(CH_3)_3Si\}_4Si$ ) of **1a** (0.02 mmol) with 1 atm of H<sub>2</sub> at room temperature for 24 hrs. The color of the solution turned from purple to dark green, and the <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR showed the conversion of **1a** to uncharac-

terizable rhodium-hydride species and H-SDmp [7e,13]. This mixture was cooled and used for the catalytic reaction.

## 3.4. Characterization of $[Cp^{1}Ir(PMe_{3})(Ph)(CO)](BAr_{4}^{F})$ (**4**) obtained from the reaction in Table 1, entry 4

According to Table 1, entry 4, complex 1b was treated with benzaldehyde and H<sub>2</sub> (1 atm) at -20 °C. After 48 h, the <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra of the reaction mixture exhibited the signals for [Cp<sup>T</sup> Ir(PMe<sub>3</sub>)(Ph)(CO)](BAr<sub>4</sub><sup>F</sup>) (**4**, 37% based on the internal standard {(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>Si}<sub>4</sub>Si), H-SDmp (37%), and **2b** (63%). Single crystals of **4** suitable for X-ray diffraction and elemental analysis were obtained by diffusing this solution into hexane at room temperature under a nitrogen atmosphere. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>):  $\delta$  7.71 (bs, 8H, o-H of Ar<sup>F</sup>), 7.56 (bs, 4H, p-H of Ar<sup>F</sup>), 7.13 (m, 5H, Ph), 1.95 (d,  $J_{PH}$  = 2.0 Hz, 15H, Cp<sup>\*</sup>), 1.63 (d,  $J_{PH}$  = 10.6 Hz, 9H, PMe<sub>3</sub>). <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ -35.6 (s, PMe<sub>3</sub>). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 167.5 (d,  $J_{PC}$  = 11.6 Hz, CO), 162.3 (q,  $J_{BC}$  = 50.2 Hz, *ipso-C* of Ar<sup>F</sup>), 139.8, 131.0 (s, o-C of Ph), 135.4 (s, o-C of Ar<sup>F</sup>), 129.4 (q,  $J_{FC}$  = 34.7 Hz, m-C of Ar<sup>F</sup>), 126.3 (s, *m*-C of Ph), 125.2 (q,  $J_{FC}$  = 274.1 Hz, CF<sub>3</sub>), 122.2 (d,  $J_{PC}$  = 9.7 Hz, ipso-C of Ph), 118.0 (s, p-C of Ar<sup>F</sup>), 104.2 (s, C<sub>5</sub>(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>5</sub>), 16.3 (d,  $J_{PC}$  = 42.5 Hz, PMe<sub>3</sub>), 9.7 (s, C<sub>5</sub>(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>5</sub>). ESI-MS (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): m/z = 509.1 (4<sup>+</sup>). IR (KBr pellet): 2042 ( $v_{CO}$ ) cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal. Calc. for C<sub>52</sub>H<sub>42</sub>PF<sub>24</sub>OBIr: C, 45.49; H, 3.08. Found: C, 45.49; H, 3.22%.

## 3.5. Degradation of **1a** in the presence of excess benzaldehyde at room temperature

The reaction of **1a** (30.4 mg, 0.02 mmol) with benzaldehyde (106.2 mg, 1 mmol) in CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at room temperature gave a brown solution. The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR showed the formation of free H-SDmp and an uncharacterizable rhodium species having Cp and PMe<sub>3</sub>. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>):  $\delta$  1.72 (d, *J*<sub>PH</sub> = 3.1 Hz, Cp<sup>\*</sup>), 1.50 (d, *J*<sub>PH</sub> = 11.0 Hz, PMe<sub>3</sub>). <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>):  $\delta$  3.29 (d, *J*<sub>RhP</sub> = 157.9 Hz, PMe<sub>3</sub>). After the catalytic hydrogenation of benzal-dehyde (Table 1, entry 1), the same rhodium species was detected as the degradation product at room temperature.

#### 3.6. X-ray structural determination

Crystal data and refinement parameters of 4 are summarized in Table 2. Single crystals were coated with oil (Immersion Oil, type B: Code 1248, Cargill Laboratories Inc.) and mounted on loop. Diffraction data were collected at -100 °C under a cold nitrogen stream on a Rigaku AFC8 equipped with Mercury CCD detector equipped with a graphite-monochromated Mo K $\alpha$  source ( $\lambda$  = 0.71070 Å). Six preliminary data frames were measured at 0.5° increments of  $\omega$ , to assess the crystal quality and preliminary unit cell parameters. The intensity images were also measured at 0.5° intervals of ω. The frame data were integrated using Rigaku/MSC CrystalClear program package, and the data sets were corrected for absorption using REQAB program. The calculation was performed with SHELX-97. Structure was solved by a Patterson method and refined by full-matrix least-square procedures on  $F^2$ . Anisotropic refinement was applied to all non-hydrogen atoms except for disordered CF<sub>3</sub> groups of BAr<sup>F</sup><sub>4</sub>. All of the hydrogen atoms were placed at calculated positions. Five of CF<sub>3</sub> groups are disordered over two positions. The atom coordinates are available as a CIF file.

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#### Table 2

Crystal data and structure refinement for  $[Cp^{*}Ir(PMe_{3})(Ph)(CO)](BAr_{4}^{F})$  (4).

	4
Formula	C <sub>52</sub> H <sub>41</sub> OIrF <sub>24</sub> PB
Formula weight	1371.86
Crystal color, habit	colorless, block
Crystal dimensions (mm)	$0.30 \times 0.10 \times 0.05$
Crystal system	Monoclinic
Space group	<i>P</i> 2/ <i>c</i> (No. 13)
a (Å)	18.611(3)
b (Å)	12.612(2)
<i>c</i> (Å)	23.741(4)
β(°)	107.041(2)
$V(Å^3)$	5327.8(16)
Ζ	4
$D_{\text{calc}} (\text{g cm}^{-3})$	1.71
$\mu$ (Mo K $lpha$ ) (cm $^{-1}$ )	26.65
Max 20 (°)	55.0
Number of reflections measured	Total: 41317
	Unique: 12168 ( <i>R</i> <sub>int</sub> = 0.069)
Number of observations (all reflections)	12168
Number of variables	707
Reflection/parameter ratio	17.21
$R_1 \ (I > 2\sigma(I))^a$	0.0538
$wR_2$ (all reflections) <sup>b</sup>	0.143
GOF on $F^{2c}$	1.069

<sup>a</sup>  $R_1 = \Sigma ||F_0| - |F_c|| / \Sigma |F_0| (I > 2\sigma(I)).$ 

 $WR_2 = [(\Sigma(w(|F_0| - |F_c|)^2 / \Sigma w F_0^2))^{1/2} \text{ (all reflections).}]$ 

<sup>c</sup> GOF =  $[\Sigma w(|F_o| - |F_c|)^2/(N_o - N_v)]^{1/2}$  (where  $N_o$  = number of observations,  $N_v$  = number of variables).

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#### **Appendix A. Supplementary material**

CCDC 715530 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge from The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/ data\_request/cif. Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.jorganchem. 2009.02.018.

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