



## Phosphorus Chemistry

How to cite: Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. 2020, 59, 23879-23884 doi.org/10.1002/anie.202011571 International Edition: doi.org/10.1002/ange.202011571 German Edition:

# Stabilization of Pentaphospholes as η<sup>5</sup>-Coordinating Ligands

Christoph Riesinger, Gábor Balázs, Michael Bodensteiner, and Manfred Scheer\*

Dedicated to Professor Hansgeorg Schnöckel on the occasion of his 80th birthday

**Abstract:** Electrophilic functionalisation of  $[Cp^*Fe(\eta^5-P_5)]$ (1) yields the first transition-metal complexes of pentaphospholes (cyclo- $P_5R$ ). Silution of 1 with  $[(Et_3Si)_2(\mu-H)][B (C_6F_5)_4$ ] leads to the ionic species  $[Cp^*Fe(\eta^5-P_5SiEt_3)][B (C_6F_5)_4$  (2), whose subsequent reaction with  $H_2O$  yields the parent compound  $[Cp^*Fe(\eta^5-P_5H)][B(C_6F_5)_4]$  (3). The synthesis of a carbon-substituted derivative  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5Me)][X]$  $([X]^{-} = [FB(C_{6}F_{5})_{3}]^{-}$  (4a),  $[B(C_{6}F_{5})_{4}]^{-}$  (4b)) is achieved by methylation of 1 employing  $[Me_3O][BF_4]$  and  $B(C_6F_5)_3$  or a combination of MeOTf and  $[Li(OEt_2)_2][B(C_6F_5)_4]$ . The structural characterisation of these compounds reveals a slight envelope structure for the cyclo- $P_5R$  ligand. Detailed NMRspectroscopic studies suggest a highly dynamic behaviour and thus a distinct lability for 2 and 3 in solution. DFT calculations shed light on the electronic structure and bonding situation of this unprecedented class of compounds.

#### Introduction

The Cyclopentadienide anion  $(Cp^-, C_5H_5^-)$  and its derivatives are some of the most utilised ligands in organometallic chemistry. They are widely used in designing catalysts, for example, group 4 metallocene derivatives for olefin polymerisation,<sup>[1]</sup> and in the stabilisation of highly reactive and thus uncommon species (e.g. the isoelectronic series of  $Cp^{R}Al$  ( $Cp^{R} = Cp^{*}$ , <sup>[2]</sup>  $Cp^{R} = Cp^{'''$ , <sup>[3]</sup>), [ $Cp^{*}Si$ ]<sup>+</sup>, <sup>[4]</sup> and  $[Cp*P]^{2+[5]}$  (Cp''' = 1,2,4- $^{t}Bu_{3}C_{5}H_{2}, Cp* = C_{5}Me_{5})$ . The powerful concept of isolobality<sup>[6]</sup> relates the exotic pentaphospholide anion ( $[cyclo-P_5]^-$ ) to Cp<sup>-</sup> (Scheme 1). Scherer et al. were able to isolate the first transition metal complexes bearing such a cyclo-P<sub>5</sub> ligand in bridging  $(\mu_2, \eta^{5:5})^{[7]}$  or end-deck  $(\eta^5)^{[8]}$ coordination. In 1987, the group of Baudler succeeded in synthesising the first alkali metal salts of  $[cyclo-P_5]^-$  (II') in solution.<sup>[9]</sup> The synthesis for such solutions could later be optimized,<sup>[10]</sup> and initial reactivity studies revealed their potential in the preparation of polyphosphorus compounds.<sup>[11]</sup> In the following decades, complexes of various transition

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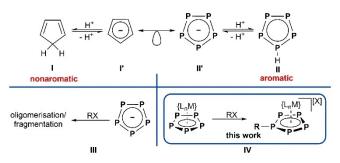


Supporting information and the ORCID identification number(s) for the author(s) of this article can be found under: https://doi.org/10.1002/anie.202011571.

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metals with cyclo-P<sub>5</sub> ligands in bridging<sup>[12]</sup> or end-deck<sup>[13]</sup> coordination modes could be obtained and it was even possible to synthesise an all-phosphorus sandwich dianion  $[(\eta^5 - P_5)_2 Ti]^{2-.[14]}$  While the synthetic strategy for these compounds usually involves the reaction of a transition metal precursor with a reactive source of phosphorus (e.g. P<sub>4</sub> or  $K_3P_7$ ), a common way to introduce the Cp<sup>-</sup> ligand (I') is by salt metathesis with [Cat][Cp] ( $[Cat]^+ = [Li]^+$ ,  $[Na]^+$ ,  $[K]^+$ ), which is obtained by deprotonation of cyclopentadiene (CpH, C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>6</sub>, Scheme 1, I). Because CpH is metastable at ambient temperatures and undergoes [2+4] Diels-Alder cyclisation (dimerisation), the question arises as to the existence of the isolobal parent pentaphosphole (cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>H), its derivatives (cyclo- $P_5R$ ), and their stability (Scheme 1, II). In view of the high reactivity of CpH, less stability can be assumed for cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>R. Consequently, attempts by Baudler et al. to obtain pentaphospholes by reacting solutions of  $[Cat][P_5]$  with alkyl halides only yielded further aggregated polyphosphines (Scheme 1, III).<sup>[15]</sup> Moreover, reports on functionalised  $P_5$ ligands coordinated to transition metal fragments are relatively scarce<sup>[16]</sup> and there are no reports on neutral pentaphosphole ligand complexes II.<sup>[17]</sup> Thus, the current literature on pentaphospholes is mostly limited to computational studies dealing with the predicted planar structure of the aromatic parent cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>H, which is in contradiction with the nonaromaticity of CpH (I).<sup>[18]</sup> Therefore, the generation and stabilisation of such a moiety seems to be a valuable target and we report herein a first access to complexes possessing a parent-aromatic cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>H ligand and related cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>R ligands, respectively.

One of the key interests of our group is the synthesis of novel polyphosphorus (P<sub>n</sub>) ligand complexes and the evaluation of their reactivity. We could demonstrate that pentamethyl-pentaphosphaferrocene ([Cp\*Fe( $\eta^5$ -P<sub>5</sub>)], 1)<sup>[8]</sup> readily



Scheme 1. Formal protonation/deprotonation reactions (I and II) of the isolobal  $Cp^-$  and cyclo- $P_5^-$  moieties, reactivity studies on cyclo- $P_5^$ with organohalides (III) and our approach of stabilising pentaphospholes in the coordination sphere of transition metals (IV).

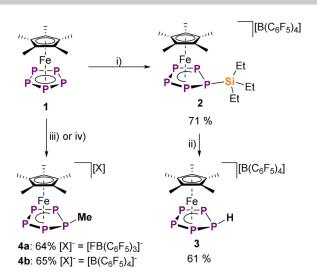
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reacts with a variety of Lewis acids to form coordination compounds.<sup>[19]</sup> It was found that 1 can be oxidised and reduced under P-P bond formation to yield a dimeric dication and dianion, respectively. Doubly reducing 1 even provides a monomeric dianion with an extremely folded cyclo-P<sub>5</sub> ligand.<sup>[20]</sup> 1 also reacts with charged main group nucleophiles to give products bearing an  $\eta^4$ -coordinated cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>R ligand with an envelope structure, representing the coordinated anionic form of the isolobal CpH moiety I.<sup>[16a]</sup> However, the reactivity of 1 towards cationic main group electrophiles (Scheme 1, IV) remains unexplored. Inspired by recent reports on the protonation of the P4-butterfly complex  $[{Cp'''Fe(CO)_2}_2(\mu,\eta^{2:2}-P_4)]^{[21]}$  and even P<sub>4</sub> (white phosphorus),<sup>[22]</sup> the question as to the possible protonation of 1 came up. Interestingly, the protonation of  $e^{[23]}$  or the  $P_4$ complexes  $[{}^{Ph}PP_{2}{}^{Cy}Fe(\eta^{4}-P_{4})]$   $({}^{Ph}PP_{2}{}^{Cy} = PhP(C_{2}H_{4}PCy_{2})_{2})^{[24]}$ and  $[Na_{2}(THF)_{5}(Cp^{Ar}Fe)_{2}(\mu,\eta^{4:4}-P_{4})]$   $(Cp^{Ar} = C_{5}(C_{6}H_{4}-4 Et_{5}^{[25]}$  occurs at the iron and not on the polyphosphorus ligand. In contrast, if the protonation of **1** were to occur at the cyclo-P<sub>5</sub> ligand, this would yield the first transition metal complex of the parent cyclo- $P_5H$  (II). However, the comparably low proton affinity of 1 labels common acids such as HBF<sub>4</sub> (in Et<sub>2</sub>O) or even  $[H(OEt_2)_2][TEF]$  ( $[TEF]^- = [Al {OC(CF_3)_3}_4^{-}$ <sup>[26]</sup> unsuitable for this purpose (for details see SI). Thus, we envisioned a two-step process in which 1 would react with an electrophile to yield a metastable intermediate, subsequently to be quenched with a suitable proton source. With this in mind, silvlium cations, sometimes referred to as masked protons,<sup>[27]</sup> seemed to be promising electrophiles to obtain the desired reactivity.

#### **Results and Discussion**

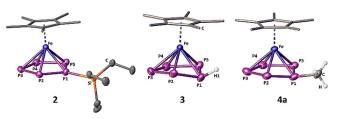
When 1 is reacted with the silvlium ion precursor  $[(Et_3Si)_2(\mu-H)][B(C_6F_5)_4]^{[28]}$  in *o*-DFB (1,2-difluorobenzene), a colour change to brownish green marks a rapid reaction providing  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5SiEt_3)][B(C_6F_5)_4]$  (2) in 71% yield (Scheme 2). 2 is stable in o-DFB solution at room temperature but decomposes slowly in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> and is insoluble in toluene or aliphatic hydrocarbons. Furthermore, the slightest traces of moisture immediately decompose 2. When 2 is treated with half an equivalent of H<sub>2</sub>O in o-DFB, a rapid colour change to bright red is observed and after workup the protonated complex  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5H)][B(C_6F_5)_4]$  (3) can be isolated in 61% yield. 3 represents the first transition metal complex of the parent pentaphosphole P<sub>5</sub>H. It is well soluble and stable in o-DFB and CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at room temperature and can be stored as a solid under inert atmosphere for several weeks. Similar to 2, 3 is highly sensitive towards moisture and air and has to be handled with great care. Thus, we also searched for ways to avoid H<sub>2</sub>O during the synthesis of 3, as slight errors in stoichiometry lead to the decomposition of the product. However, when 2 was reacted with MeOH as a proton source, the <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectrum of the corresponding reaction solution suggested that, besides 3, a second species ([Cp\*Fe( $\eta^5$ - $P_5Me$ )][B(C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub>)<sub>4</sub>], **4b**) with a substituted  $P_5$  ligand is formed, which we assume to be caused by C-O bond cleavage of MeOH induced by the silvlium cation (vide infra, Figure 2d).



 $\begin{array}{l} \textbf{Scheme 2.} \ensuremath{ Reaction of 1 with cationic main group electrophiles to yield silylated (2), protonated (3) and methylated (4) pentaphosphole complexes: i) 1 equiv. [(Et_3Si)_2(\mu-H)][B(C_6F_5)_4], o-DFB, r.t., 1 h; ii) 0.5 equiv. H_2O, o-DFB, r.t., 1 h; iii) 1.1 equiv. [Me_3O][BF_4] in o-DFB, 2. 1 equiv. B(C_6F_5)_3, o-DFB, r.t., 3 h; iv) 1.1 equiv. MeOTf in o-DFB, r.t., 1 h, 2. 1 equiv. [Li(OEt_2)_2][B(C_6F_5)_4], o-DFB, r.t., 18 h. \end{array}$ 

The respective product mixture could, however, not be separated. Thus, we sought for an alternative way to access the methylated derivative 4 which we found in the stoichiometric reaction of 1 with a trimethyloxonium salt. When 1 is reacted with  $[Me_3O][BF_4]$  and  $B(C_6F_5)_3$  in *o*-DFB at room temperature, a slow colour change of the solution from clear green to brownish red can be observed. After workup and crystallisation,  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5Me)][FB(C_6F_5)_3] \cdot {HFB(C_6F_5)_3}_{0.5}$  $(4a \cdot \{HFB(C_6F_5)_3\}_{0.5})$ , a carbon-substituted pentaphosphole transition metal complex, can be isolated as dark red crystals in 64 % yield (Scheme 2). In addition, we found an even easier way to access the methylated derivative 4 and avoided the stoichiometric formation of  $HFB(C_6F_5)_3$  by reacting 1 with MeOTf followed by the addition of one equivalent of  $[Li(OEt_2)_2][B(C_6F_5)_4]$ . After workup, the product **4b** can then be isolated as dark red crystals in 65% yield (Scheme 2).

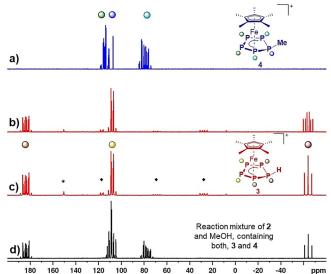
Compounds 2, 3 and 4 crystallise from mixtures of o-DFB or  $CH_2Cl_2$  and *n*-hexane at -30 °C (2 and 3) or at room temperature (4) as dark green plates (2) and red blocks (3, 4), respectively, which allowed for their X-ray crystallographic investigation. The core-structural motif of the cations is a slightly bent cyclo- $P_5R$  ( $R = SiEt_3$  (2), H (3), Me (4)) ligand coordinating to the  $\{Cp*Fe\}^+$  moiety in  $\eta^5$  mode (Figure 1). In contrast to the previously reported anionic compounds  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^4-P_5R)]^{-}$ , [16a] the substituents at the P1 atom in 2, 3 and 4 are oriented in exo-fashion with regard to the envelope of the  $P_5$  ring (towards the {Cp\*Fe}<sup>+</sup> moiety). The P-P bond lengths in 2 (2.099(1)-2.122(1) Å) are similar to each other, and those in 3 (2.115(1)-2.130(1) Å) and 4 (2.108(4)-2.133-(4) Å) are only slightly longer and in-between the expected values for P-P single (2.22 Å) and double (2.04 Å) bonds.<sup>[29]</sup> The deviation of the P1 atom from the plane spanned by the other P atoms is less pronounced in 2  $(7.44(6)^{\circ})$  than in 3  $(25.38(5)^{\circ})$  and 4  $(18.1(2)^{\circ})$ , which may be attributed to the sterically demanding SiEt<sub>3</sub> group in 2. The P1-Fe distances are



**Figure 1.** Solid state structures of the cations in 2, 3 and 4; Hydrogen atoms at the Cp\* ligand and the Et groups in 2, the anions  $[B(C_6F_5)_3]^-$  (2 and 3) and  $[FB(C_6F_5)_3]^-$  (4a) and cocrystallised  $[H][FB(C_6F_5)_3]$  (4a) are omitted for clarity. As the *cyclo*-P<sub>5</sub>Me ligand in 4b is disordered, only structural parameters within 4a are discussed; ADPs are drawn at the 50% probability level.

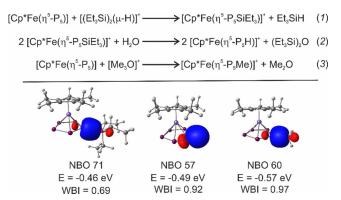
only slightly longer (2: 2.3010(7) Å, 3: 2.3729(5) Å, 4: 2.306-(3) Å) than the sum of the covalent radii (2.27 Å), which we attribute to the bonding interaction between the Fe centre and the back lobe of an occupied p-orbital of P1 (vide infra). The P1–Si bond in 2 (2.308(1) Å) is slightly longer than the expected P-Si single bond (2.27 Å),<sup>[29]</sup> which may again be caused by the steric bulk of the SiEt<sub>3</sub> group and points towards a comparably weak bond between these atoms. In contrast, the P1–C bond length in 4(1.848(9) Å) is well within the expected values for a P-C single bond (1.86 Å). The position of H1 in 3 is clearly visible in the difference electron density map, but standard refinement of hydrogen positions from X-ray diffraction data is known to underestimate their distance to adjacent atoms. Thus, it is not surprising that the determined P1–H1 bond length for **3** is only 1.29(3) Å, which is distinctly shorter than the sum of the covalent radii (1.43 Å).<sup>[29]</sup> Consequently, neutron diffraction data obtained on compounds containing P-H bonds shows P-H distances much closer to the expected value of 1.43 Å,<sup>[30]</sup> even when there is a positive charge localisation at the P atom as in [PH<sub>4</sub>][I].<sup>[31]</sup>

NMR spectroscopic investigations of 2 in o-DFB revealed its dynamic behaviour in solution at room temperature (see SI). The respective <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectrum shows three broad signals centred at 87.6, 102.7 and 149.8 ppm. Upon cooling, the signals sharpen up and at -30 °C a clear AA'MXX' spin system can be observed, which proves the structural integrity of **2** in solution. Additionally, the signal for  $P^M$  shows the expected <sup>29</sup>Si satellites and the <sup>29</sup>Si{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectrum reveals a doublet ( ${}^{1}J_{\text{Si-P}} = 61 \text{ Hz}$ ) at 42 ppm, which is slightly upfield shifted compared to the starting material ( $\delta =$ 57 ppm).<sup>[28]</sup> Similar to 2, 3 expresses dynamic behaviour in solution  $(CD_2Cl_2)$  at room temperature, which is indicated by three broad resonances centred at -60.9, 112.6 and 179.6 ppm in the <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectrum. Consequently, the respective <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum shows a broad resonance at 1.56 ppm for the Cp\* ligand and an additional very broad signal for the proton of the phosphole ligand ( $\delta = 4.6$  ppm). Upon cooling the sample, the signals in the <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectrum become sharper and at -80 °C a well resolved AA'MM'X spin system is observed (Figure 2c). While these signals are only slightly shifted compared to the room temperature spectrum, the  $P^X$ signal shows additional coupling in the <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectrum  $({}^{1}J_{P-H} = 316 \text{ Hz}, \text{ Figure 2b})$ . The same coupling constant is



**Figure 2.** a) <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectrum of isolated 4 in CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at r. t., b) <sup>31</sup>P and c) <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra of isolated 3 in CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at -80 °C and d) <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectrum of the product mixture obtained from the reaction of 2 with MeOH in CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at -80 °C; assignment of P atoms to the molecular structures of 3 and 4 is provided by the colour code of the signals; \* marks the signal for residual 1 and  $\blacklozenge$  a group of signals assigned to trace impurities of an unidentified side product.

found for the P<sub>5</sub>H signal ( $\delta = 4.6$  ppm) in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum at -80 °C. Neither the <sup>11</sup>B nor the <sup>19</sup>F NMR spectrum of **3** reveal an interaction of the [B(C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub>)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup> counteranion with the proton. However, traces of **1** can be detected in the <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectrum of **3** (even after several recrystallisation steps). We thus attribute the observed dynamic behaviour to a "bond-breaking/bond-forming" process between **3** itself and **1** (see SI for further details). In contrast to **2** and **3**, **4** shows a well-resolved AA'BXX' spin system with signals centred at 78.7, 111.8 and 114.2 ppm in the <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectrum (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, Figure 2a). Thus, dynamic behaviour (on the NMR time scale) of **4** in solution at room temperature can be ruled out. In keeping with that, the

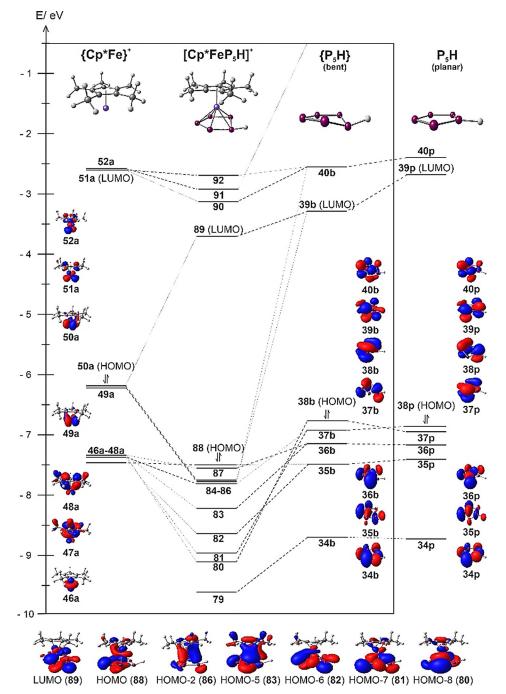


*Figure 3.* Reaction equations for the formation of 2, 3 and 4 (top); NBO orbitals representing the bond between the  $P_5$  moiety and the respective substituent in 2, 3 and 4, respectively (isosurfaces drawn at 0.04 contour value), the energies of these orbitals and the respective WBIs (bottom).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, r. t.) of **4** shows a singlet for the Cp\* ligand ( $\delta = 1.7$  ppm) and a doublet of triplets for the methyl group of the P<sub>5</sub>Me ligand ( $\delta = 2.68$  ppm, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H-P</sub> = 11.2 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H-P</sub> = 3.8 Hz). Consistent with the dynamic behaviour in solution, **3** undergoes partial fragmentation under ESI-MS conditions, and several other species are detected besides the molecular ion **3**<sup>+</sup> (*m*/*z* = 347). This behaviour is even more pronounced for **2**, for which the molecular ion peak is absent and of which only fragments can be detected in the ESI mass spectrum. In contrast, for **4**, the molecular ion peak is

detected at m/z = 361 (4<sup>+</sup>) and only minor hints of fragmentation are observed under ESI MS conditions.

To obtain further insight into the reaction energetics and the electronic structure of the obtained products **2–4**, DFT calculations were carried out at the B3LYP<sup>[32]</sup>/def2-TZVP<sup>[33]</sup> level of theory (see SI for details). The silylation reaction ((1), Figure 3) of **1** is only slightly exothermic with a reaction enthalpy of  $\Delta H = -31.41$  kJ mol<sup>-1</sup>, which is in line with the experimentally observed dynamic behaviour and instability of **2**. However, the follow-up hydrolysis (2) of **2** is highly



**Figure 4.** Section of the orbital interaction diagram for  $3^+$ , which is split into the cationic {Cp\*Fe}<sup>+</sup> and the neutral *cyclo*-P<sub>5</sub>H fragments; as well as selected frontier orbitals of both fragments (isosurfaces at 0.04 contour value), and  $3^+$ . Additionally, the frontier orbitals of the bent geometry of the P<sub>5</sub>H ligand observed in  $3^+$  are compared to those of the planar geometry (global minimum structure of free *cyclo*-P<sub>5</sub>H).

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Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. 2020, 59, 23879-23884

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the methylation (3) of  $\mathbf{1}$  ( $\Delta H = -122.96 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$ ). The latter is in line with the calculated methyl cation affinity<sup>[34]</sup> of **1** (see Scheme S1). NBO analysis<sup>[35]</sup> revealed sigma bonding interaction between the P1 atom and the respective substituent in 2, 3 and 4 (Figure 3). While the Wiberg bond indices (WBI) for the P–H bond in 3 (WBI=0.92) and the P–C bond in 4 (WBI = 0.97) are in line with the formulation as single bonds, the one for the P–Si bond in 2 (WBI = 0.69) is significantly smaller. Additionally, the charge distribution between the  $\{Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5)\}\)$  moiety and the respective substituent suggests a more polar bond for 2 than for 3 and 4. This corresponds with the dynamic behaviour of 2 in solution and the elongated P-Si distance observed in the solid state, underlining the weak character of this bond and the high instability of 2. As 3 displays the first isolated coordination complex of the parent pentaphosphole cyclo-P5H and the molecular structure of free cyclo-P5H has been subject to numerous computational studies,<sup>[18]</sup> we were especially interested in the orbital interactions within the cation  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5H)]^+$  (Figure 4, see SI for details). While the global minimum geometry of free  $P_5H$  is planar, the coordination to the  $\{Cp^*Fe\}^+$  fragment in 3 leads to a bent geometry for the P<sub>5</sub>H ligand. However, we found that the differences regarding the orbital energy and the symmetry of the frontier molecular orbitals (MOs) of both geometries are minor. Namely, the HOMO and HOMO-1 switch places by going from planar P<sub>5</sub>H to the bent geometry, and the LUMO experiences a lowering in energy of 0.61 eV (Figure 4). Additionally, the aromatic character of the  $P_5H$ moiety is largely preserved in the bent geometry as indicated by a comparison of NICS $(1/-1)_{zz}$  [36] values of -31.71/-30.92and -37.19 for the bent and planar geometry of P<sub>5</sub>H, respectively, obtained at the PBE0<sup>[37]</sup>/aug-pcSseg-2<sup>[38]</sup> level of theory. While the HOMO (88) and HOMO-1 (87) in 3 can be considered as non-bonding, bonding interaction can be found for the MOs 84 ( $\pi$  bond), 85 ( $\delta$  bond) and 86 ( $\delta$  bond). The strongest bonding interactions, however, become manifest in the HOMO-7 (81) and HOMO-8 (80) which display large contributions from the HOMO (38b) and HOMO-1 (37b) of the  $P_5H$  ligand. The LUMO (89) of **3** is mainly located at the P5H ligand, which goes hand in hand with the large contribution of the LUMO (39b) of the P<sub>5</sub>H ligand itself. As 37b itself shows a large contribution from one of the p orbitals localised at P1 and contributes to the bonding MOs 86 and 81 in 3, the hapticity of the  $P_5H$  ligand in 3 can be regarded as  $\eta^5$ . A related bonding motif has already been found in the oxidation  $product^{[20]}$  of **1** and is consistent with the short P1-Fe distances found in the solid state structure of 2-4 (vide supra). In account of the bonding situation in 3 and the aromaticity of the bent cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>H ligand, the description of  ${\bf 3}$  as a coordination complex of neutral  $\mathit{cyclo-P_5H}$  and the {Cp\*Fe}<sup>+</sup> fragment seems appropriate, despite the high degree of covalency between the  $cyclo-P_5H$  and the  $\{Cp*Fe\}^+$ fragment.

exothermic ( $\Delta H = -89.49 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$ ), which is also the case for

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we were able to isolate and fully characterise the first transition metal complexes bearing pentaphosphole (cyclo-P<sub>5</sub>R) ligands. Silulation and methylation of  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5)]$  (1) afforded the respective products [Cp\*Fe- $(\eta^5 - P_5 R) [X]$  (R = SiEt<sub>3</sub>, [X]<sup>-</sup> = [B(C\_6 F\_5)\_4]<sup>-</sup> (2); R = Me,  $[X]^{-} = [FB(C_6F_5)_3]^{-} (4a), [X]^{-} = [B(C_6F_5)_4]^{-} (4b)).$  Selective hydrolysis of 2 results in P-Si bond cleavage and yields the protonated compound  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5H)][B(C_6F_5)_4]$  (3), which bears the parent cyclo-P5H ligand. Crystallographic characterisation of these compounds revealed that the  $P_5R$  unit, in contrast to earlier computational predictions,<sup>[18]</sup> shows a slight envelope structure, which we attribute to the coordination to the {Cp\*Fe}<sup>+</sup> fragment. Detailed computational analysis of the parent compound 3 highlights the preservation of the aromatic character of the cyclo-P5H ligand upon coordination and slightly bending and sheds light on the covalent bonding situation within the cation  $[Cp*Fe(\eta^5-P_5H)]^+$ . Furthermore, the cationic charge of the obtained compounds may allow for the functionalisation of the cyclo-P5R ligand, which could lead to further advances in polyphosphorus chemistry.

### Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG Sche 384/36-1). Open access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

# **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Keywords:** electrophilic functionalisation · iron · pentaphosphole · polyphosphorus ligands · protonation

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Manuscript received: August 24, 2020 Accepted manuscript online: September 21, 2020 Version of record online: October 22, 2020

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