## Supporting Information for:

# Nucleophilic activity of a linked bis{guanidine} leading to formation of a dicationic C<sub>4</sub>N<sub>4</sub>-heterocycle

Martyn P. Coles, Steven F. Lee, Sarah H. Oakley, Guillermina Estiu, and Peter B. Hitchcock<sup>†</sup>

Department of Chemistry, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1-9QJ, UK Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556-5670, USA

Contents:

- pS2 Synthesis of  $[H_2C{hpp}_2CH_2][CI]_2$  (2a-H<sub>2</sub>).
- $pS2 \quad Synthesis \ of \ [H_2C\{hpp\}_2CH_2][BPh_4]_2 \ (\textbf{2b}).$
- pS3 General procedure for the preparation of  $[H_2C{hppR}_2][X]_2$ .
- pS3 General procedure for the preparation of {H<sub>2</sub>C{hppR}<sub>2</sub>][BPh<sub>4</sub>]<sub>2</sub>.
- pS3 Characterizing data for [H<sub>2</sub>C{hppMe}<sub>2</sub>][I]<sub>2</sub> (3a).
- pS3 Characterizing data for  $[H_2C{hppCH_2Ph}_2][BPh_4]_2$  (4b).
- pS4 Reaction of  $H_2C{hpp}_2$  with  $Me_2CHI$ .
- pS5 Optimized coordinates for 'chair'-conformation (A)
- pS6 Optimized coordinates for 'twist-boat'-conformation (C)
- pS7 Optimized coordinates for transition-state (B)
- pS8 ORTEP for [H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>][BPh<sub>4</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (**2b**)
- pS9 ORTEP for  $[H_2C{hppCH_2Ph}_2][BPh_4]_2$  (4b)

#### [H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>][Cl]<sub>2</sub> (**2a-H<sub>2</sub>**)

H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub> (**1**, 1.00g, 3.44 mmol) was dissolved in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (~ 2 mL) and left at room temperature for 3 days, during which time colourless crystals deposited from solution. Yield 0.77 g, (41 %, calculated for the bis-dichloromethane solvate). Elemental analysis calcd (%) for C<sub>16</sub>H<sub>28</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>N<sub>6</sub>·2(CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) (*542.08*): C 39.85, H 5.95, N 15.50; found: C 39.73, H 6.18, N 15.41. **2a-H<sub>2</sub>**: <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, D<sub>2</sub>O, 298 K): Major Isomer:  $\delta$  5.15 and 4.22 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 15.6, *exocyclic CH<sub>2</sub>*). Minor Isomer:  $\delta$  5.31 and 4.31 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>HH</sub> = 15.8, *exocyclic CH<sub>2</sub>*). The remaining methylene groups of the bicyclic framework overlap in the following regions:  $\delta$  3.43 (m, 4H, hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.29 (m, 8H, hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.20 (m, 4H, hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 1.88 (m, 8H, hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, D<sub>2</sub>O, 298 K):  $\delta$  160.8 (*C*N<sub>3</sub>), 152.0 (*C*N<sub>3</sub>), 74.8 (*exocyclic CH<sub>2</sub>*), 68.1 (*exocyclic CH<sub>2</sub>*), 47.5 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 47.4 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 47.2 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.4 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.1 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>). **2a-D<sub>2</sub>**: [<sup>2</sup>H]- NMR (76.8 MHz, D<sub>2</sub>O, 298 K): 5.05 (br, CD<sub>2</sub>), 4.13 (br, CD<sub>2</sub>).

#### $[H_2C{hpp}_2CH_2][BPh_4]_2$ (**2b**)

A solution of NaBPh<sub>4</sub> (0.25 g, 0.73 mmol) in 2 mL H<sub>2</sub>O was added *via* syringe to **2a**-*H*<sub>2</sub> (0.20 g, 0.37 mmol) in 1 mL H<sub>2</sub>O, causing the immediate precipitation of a white solid. The product was isolated by filtration and purified by slow cooling of a saturated MeCN solution, affording pure **2b** as colourless prisms. Yield 0.25 g, (72 %). Elemental analysis calcd (%) for C<sub>64</sub>H<sub>68</sub>B<sub>2</sub>N<sub>6</sub> (*931.56*): C 81.53, H 7.21, N 8.92; found: C 81.46, H 7.25, N 8.89. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298 K): Anion resonances:  $\delta$  7.25 (br m, 16H, *o*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>5</sub>), 6.99 (t, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 7.40, 16H, *m*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>5</sub>), 6.83 (t, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 7.22, 8H, *p*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>5</sub>). Major Isomer:  $\delta$  5.06 and 4.15 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 15.7, *exocyclic CH*<sub>2</sub>). Minor Isomer: 5.17 and 4.20 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>HH</sub> = 15.9, *exocyclic CH*<sub>2</sub>). The remaining methylene groups of the bicyclic framework overlap in the following regions:  $\delta$  3.42 (m, 4H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 3.34 (m, 8H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 3.26 (m, 4H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 1.93 (m, 8H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 353 K):  $\delta$  164.2 (q, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>CB</sub> = 49.1, *i*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 161.4 (*C*N<sub>3</sub>), 136.1 (*C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 125.8 (q, *J*<sub>CB</sub> = 2.7, *C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 122.0 (*C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 75.4 (*exocyclic CH*<sub>2</sub>), 68.7 (*exocyclic CH*<sub>2</sub>), 48.1 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 48.0 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 47.9 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 47.8 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.9 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>), 21.6 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>).

#### General procedure for the preparation of [H<sub>2</sub>C{hppR}<sub>2</sub>][X]<sub>2</sub>

A sample of **1** was dissolved in neat R-X reagent and stirred for 1-3 days. Addition of Et<sub>2</sub>O resulted in formation of a white solid that was separated from excess RX by filtration.

## General procedure for the preparation of {H<sub>2</sub>C{hppR}<sub>2</sub>][BPh<sub>4</sub>]<sub>2</sub>

A solution of two equivalents of NaBPh<sub>4</sub> in  $H_2O$  was added to an aqueous stirred solution of [{ $H_2C$ {hppR}<sub>2</sub>][X]<sub>2</sub>. The product generally precipitated from the reaction mixture and was isolated by filtration. Purification was achieved by crystallization, as detailed below:

#### [H<sub>2</sub>C{hppMe}<sub>2</sub>][I]<sub>2</sub> (3).

Compound **3a** was purified by crystallization from MeOH at -30 °C. Yield 98 %. Elemental analysis calcd (%) for  $C_{17}H_{32}N_6I_2$  (*574.08*): C 35.54, H 5.62, N 14.64; found: C 35.65, H 5.72, N 14.53. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, D<sub>2</sub>O, 298 K):  $\delta$  4.72 (s, 2H, *H*<sub>2</sub>C{hppMe}<sub>2</sub>), 3.38 (m, 8H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 3.20 (m, 8H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 2.91 (s, 6H, hpp*M*e), 1.96 (m, 8H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, D<sub>2</sub>O, 298 K):  $\delta$  158.2 (*C*N<sub>3</sub>), 66.1 (H<sub>2</sub>C{hppMe}<sub>2</sub>), 48.9 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 48.3 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 48.1 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 44.1 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 41.6 (hpp*M*e), 21.4 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 20.6 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>).

#### $[H_2C{hppCH_2Ph}_2][BPh_4]_2$ (**4b**).

Compound **4b** was purified by crystallization from MeOH / acetone at room temperature. Yield 65 %. Elemental analysis calcd (%) for  $C_{77}H_{80}B_2N_6$  (*1111.12*): C 83.19, H 7.26, N 7.56; found: C 83.23, H 7.30, N 7.61. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, D<sub>6</sub>-acetone, 298 K): Anion resonances:  $\delta$  7.36 (br m, 16H, o-C<sub>6</sub> $H_5$ ), 6.95 (t, <sup>3</sup> $J_{HH}$  = 7.38, 16H, m-C<sub>6</sub> $H_5$ ), 6.81 (t, <sup>3</sup> $J_{HH}$  = 7.19, 8H, p-C<sub>6</sub> $H_5$ ). Cation resonances:  $\delta$  7.41 (m, 6H, *m*- and p-C<sub>6</sub> $H_5$ ), 7.27 (d, <sup>3</sup> $J_{HH}$  = 7.50, 4H, o-C<sub>6</sub> $H_5$ ), 5.01 (s, 2H,  $H_2$ C{hppCH<sub>2</sub>Ph}<sub>2</sub>), 4.44 (s, 4H, hppC $H_2$ Ph), 3.49 (m, 12H, hpp-C $H_2$ ), 3.27 (m, 4H, hpp-C $H_2$ ), 2.14 (m, 4H, hpp-C $H_2$ ), 1.88 (m, 4H, hpp-C $H_2$ ). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, D<sub>6</sub>-acetone, 273K):  $\delta$  164.6 (q, <sup>1</sup> $J_{CB}$  = 49.1, *i*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>-BPh<sub>4</sub>), 158.9 (CN<sub>3</sub>), 136.6 ( $C_6H_5$ -BPh<sub>4</sub>), 135.1 (CH<sub>2</sub>Ph), 129.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>Ph), 128.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>Ph), 127.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>Ph), 125.7 (q,  $J_{CB}$  = 2.8,  $C_6H_5$ -BPh<sub>4</sub>), 122.0 ( $C_6H_5$ ), 66.2 (H<sub>2</sub>C{hppCH<sub>2</sub>Ph}<sub>2</sub>), 57.0 (H<sub>2</sub>C{hppCH<sub>2</sub>Ph}<sub>2</sub>), 20.9 (hpp-CH<sub>2</sub>).

## Reaction of H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub> with Me<sub>2</sub>CHI

Excess Me<sub>2</sub>CHI was added to an NMR tube containing a solution of H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub> in CD<sub>3</sub>CN and the sample was sealed. After 15h the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum showed 100% conversion to a new guanidine containing species, with resonances at  $\delta$  6.07 (m, 1H, =C*H*Me), 5.29-5.13 (m, 2H, =C*H*<sub>2</sub>) and 1.37 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, =CH*Me*) corresponding to propene.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298 K):  $\delta$  5.19 (s, 2H, *H*<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}{hppH}), 3.63 (m, 4H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 3.51 (m, 4H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 3.41 (m, 8H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 2.17 (m, 8H, hpp-C*H*<sub>2</sub>).<sup>‡ 13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298 K):  $\delta$  152.2 (*C*N<sub>3</sub>), 66.6 (H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}{hppH}), 48.2 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 48.0 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 47.7 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 41.0 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 22.5 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>), 22.2 (hpp-*C*H<sub>2</sub>).

(‡ resonance corresponding to the NH proton(s) not observed).

# Optimized coordinates for 'chair'-conformation (red)

2,241790	1,229019	-2.511783
-2 213321	1 188580	-2 555799
1 222151	2 624707	-1 025761
1 227054	2.024797	1 00007
-1.337054	2.599384	-1.965057
-3.84/433	2.909408	-1.682427
3.831294	2.974299	-1.605982
1.993604	1.816288	-1.621033
-1.991413	1.780894	-1.661437
4.671352	0.756373	-1.348391
-4.656649	0.678709	-1.438617
-3.267965	2.286278	-0.995126
3.249089	2.341155	-0.930209
0.020345	-1.217511	-0.970913
1.248204	0.957376	-0.670783
-4.109060	1.085025	-0.580675
-4.818233	-1.436605	-0.276478
4.101393	1.153237	-0.500818
-1.250432	0.935154	-0.696096
-3.012889	2,905517	-0.127819
4.844825	-1.357225	-0.182782
2 967622	2,955200	-0.067408
-0.020056	2.533977	-0.209820
-4 844826	1 357225	0 182782
3 289707	0 027444	0 031940
-0 011652	1 448086	-0 094265
1 957977	0 016878	0.004200
-3 289708	-0 027444	-0 031940
-2 967623	-2 955200	0.051040
	-2.955200	0.007407
3.012888	-2.905517	0.12/019
-1.95/9/0	-0.010070	-0.019360
4.010232	1 440000	0.276477
0.011651	-1.448086	0.094265
-4.101394	-1.153237	0.500818
0.020055	-2.533977	0.209819
4.109059	-1.085025	0.5806/5
1.250431	-0.935154	0.696095
-3.249090	-2.341155	0.930209
3.267964	-2.286278	0.995126
-1.248205	-0.957376	0.670783
-4.671352	-0.756373	1.348390
-0.020345	1.217511	0.970912
4.656649	-0.678709	1.438617
-3.831294	-2.974299	1.605982
3.847432	-2.909408	1.682427
1.991412	-1.780894	1.661436
-1.993605	-1.816288	1.621033
1.337053	-2.599384	1.965057
-1.332152	-2.624797	1.935760
-2.241791	-1.229019	2.511783
2.213321	-1.188580	2.555799

# Optimized coordinates for 'twist-boat'-conformation (blue)

6	-4.193875	-1.089502	2.176698
6 7	-4.242514	0.400797	1 001004
7 6	-1 871514	0.920015	1 302915
e 7	-2.122999	-1.056461	0.804326
, 6	-3.376417	-1.797215	1.106692
6	-2.591702	2.284311	2.320008
6	-1.550171	2.953850	1.432410
6	-0.283967	2.109875	1.433036
7	-0.592741	0.665118	1.277756
6	-1.248861	-1.717230	-0.192530
7	-0.653053	-0.817477	-1.160746
6	-1.367249	-0.565292	-2.433350
6	-0.556663	-1.177442	-3.570047
6 7	0.81/280	-0.518936	-3.58/191
6	0 678614	-0.209133	-2.225198
7	1 287924	-0 448152	0 109390
6	2.769811	-0.396461	0.145694
6	3.249603	0.642513	-0.860867
6	2.751262	0.247785	-2.244260
6	0.542735	-0.232372	1.373552
1	-5.203555	-1.509218	2.194545
1	-3.756455	-1.244856	3.168902
1	-4.758464	0.950022	2.654337
1	-4.760097	0.602660	0.918283
1	-3.104245	-2.808432	1.42/960
1	-2 261339	2 226397	3 364756
1	-3.536721	2.829852	2.295121
1	-1.315757	3.954828	1.805421
1	-1.949525	3.065609	0.418380
1	0.256427	2.236458	2.378801
1	0.387925	2.404020	0.619318
1	-1.899195	-2.413280	-0.728292
	-0.473702	-2.319951	0.284421
1	-1.492676	0.514936	-2.56916/ 2.251770
⊥ 1	-2.301/51	-1.006451 -1.014212	-2.351770
1	-0 474025	-2 259765	-3 422161
1	0.775400	0.452832	-4.092213
1	1.547090	-1.136337	-4.120943
1	3.170746	-1.390505	-0.082160
1	3.074543	-0.146588	1.163091
1	4.342135	0.693975	-0.872505
1	2.878410	1.633216	-0.575978
1	3.378354	-0.542249	-2.673057
⊥ 1	2.//5650	1.098025	-2.933644
⊥ 1	1 262300	-1.1/5495 0.216314	2.062068
-		0.210011	2.002000

## Optimized coordinates for transition-state (green)

-2.040040 -2.635830	-2.485834 -2.508056	-0.287545 1.107978
-1.162507	-1.276896	-0.409882
-3.514566	-1.272188	1.223176
0.195370	-1.756699	-0.797943
-1.810158	-0.093708	-0.205239
1.472644	-1.005113	-0.856110
-3.008899	-0.131331	0.415445
-1.337663	1.104672	-0.642142
2.583955	-1.966598	-1.108789
1.839/96	0.124358 1 227622	-U.1/5699
-0.030520	1.23/623	-1.2532//
-2 058648	2 352091	-0 289314
3.258888	-2.300249	0.216218
3.009538	0.179668	0.468395
-3.546868	2.130543	-0.489530
1.049857	1.216434	-0.274877
3.846275	-1.009779	0.774458
3.595930	1.448292	0.971201
1.379362	2.444740	0.480103
2.884694	2.672815	0.414814
2.169535	-2.847734	-1.601173
-1.440100	-3.372629	-0.409291
-4.946851	0.593275	0.125488
0.083026	-2.187102	-1.798351
-0.008933	2.196563	-1.773498
-3.236438	-3.408351	1.266377
-4.521822	-1.488775	0.852606
-4.064775	1.344111	1.460044
-1.685516	3.136116	-0.950674
-1.836433	2.641607	0.746042
4.056918	-3.03586/	0.080404
-2.015000	-2.43172	-1.059303
-3.748182	1.893820	-1.539419
-1.833787	-2.510806	1.853758
-4.108398	3.034783	-0.238707
-3.611136	-0.929407	2.259278
4.829328	-0.815825	0.332110
4.654518	1.449556	0.694188
3.976050	-1.055378	1.860984
3.280503	-1.499114	-1.811831
3.540649	1.421/16 2 270521	2.065/88
1 022704	2.2/0521 2.348311	1 515901
3.184564	2.860075	-0.621786
3.164997	3.551213	1.002993
0.379196	-2.580311	-0.098295



ORTEP for [H<sub>2</sub>C{hppCH<sub>2</sub>Ph}<sub>2</sub>][BPh<sub>4</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (4b)





<sup>13</sup>C NMR [H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>] [CI]<sub>2</sub> (2a-H<sub>2</sub>): D<sub>2</sub>O, 298K, 125 MHz



<sup>1</sup>H NMR [H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>] [BPh<sub>4</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (2b): CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K, 300 MHz



<sup>13</sup>C NMR [H<sub>2</sub>C{hpp}<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>] [BPh<sub>4</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (2b): CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 333K, 75 MHz



<sup>1</sup>H NMR [H<sub>2</sub>C{hppMe}<sub>2</sub>] [I]<sub>2</sub> (3): D<sub>2</sub>O, 298K, 300 MHz



<sup>13</sup>C NMR [H<sub>2</sub>C{hppMe}<sub>2</sub>] [I]<sub>2</sub> (3): D<sub>2</sub>O, 298K, 75 MHz (+ DEPT 135)







<sup>13</sup>C NMR [H<sub>2</sub>C{hppCH<sub>2</sub>Ph}<sub>2</sub>] [BPh<sub>4</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (4b): D<sub>6</sub>-acetone, 298K, 75 MHz