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# Synthesis and characterization of two novel Schiff base Pd(II) complexes based on 3,5-Diiodo- and 3,5-Dibromosalicylaldehydes

*Alina A. Skorynina<sup>1,\*</sup>, Aram L. Bugaev<sup>1</sup>, Vera V. Butova<sup>1</sup>, Olga A. Burachevskaia<sup>1</sup>, Pavel G. Morozov<sup>2</sup>, Igor A. Estrin<sup>3</sup>, Abdelaziz Aboraia<sup>4</sup>, Evgeny V. Khramov<sup>5</sup>, Alexey A. Veligzhanin<sup>5</sup>, and Alexander V. Soldatov<sup>1</sup>* 

<sup>1</sup>The Smart Materials Research Institute, Southern Federal University, Sladkova 178/24, 344090 Rostov-on-Don, Russia <sup>2</sup>Department of Chemistry, Southern Federal University, Zorge 7, 344090 Rostov-on-Don, Russia

<sup>3</sup>Rostov State Transport University, Rostovskogo Strelkovogo Polka Narodnogo Opolcheniya Sq. 2, 344038 Rostov-on-Don, Russia

<sup>4</sup>Physics department, Faculty of Science, Al-Azhar University assiut branch, 71542, Egypt <sup>5</sup>National Research Centre "Kurchatov Institute", Ak. Kurchatov Sq. 1, 123182, Moscow, Russia

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**Abstract:** We report on the synthesis and characterization of the two novel Schiff base Pd(II) complexes based on 3,5-diiodoand 3,5-dibromosalicylaldehydes. Synthesis was made by the condensation method of these aldehydes with p-Anisidine. The structural features of the complexes were comprehensively analyzed by <sup>1</sup>H nuclear magnetic resonance, X-ray diffraction, optical, vibrational and X-ray absorption spectroscopies. The analysis of experimental data supported by theoretical simulations at the density functional theory level confirmed the formation of the Pd(II) complexes, and provided detailed information on the local environment of the palladium atoms.

Keywords: Palladium complexes, Schiff bases, XANES; EXAFS; UV-Vis

## **1** Introduction

Palladium (Pd) is one of the most catalytically miscellaneous transition metals used in its different oxidation states and coordination in various industrially relevant reactions. Pd(II) and, less often, Pd(III) complexes, depending on the types of coordinating ligands, find numerous applications from oxidation of hydrocarbons [1-4] to anti-tumor treatment [5-10]. Different Pd(II) Schiff base complexes have been used as catalysts for ethylene polymerization, epoxidation of alkenes [11], carbonylation [12], allylic alkylation [13], Suzuki [14, 15] and Heck [16] reactions.

In heterogenous catalysis, Pd(II) complexes can be created by introducing Pd active sites into porous supports, such as zeolites [17-19], covalent organic frameworks (COFs) [20-24] or metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) [15, 25-31], via organic ligands. In many cases, the functionalization by an organic ligand precedes the introduction of Pd, and the homogenous distribution of the ligands through the support material is crucial. In case the ligand contains a specific element, which can be used as a la-bel-atom, the distribution of the potential Pd-binding sites can be easily probed [27, 32].

Schiff base complexes are also used in biochemistry as antifungal and antibacterial agents [33-36]. Back in 1947, the properties of halogenated salicylaldehydes for antibacterial and antifungal use were investigated [37] and have shown the activity against both fungi and gram-negative and gram-positive bacteria. Later, some of these salicylaldehydes were used in the synthesis of Schiff bases complexes with various bi-valent and trivalent metal atoms, including works with 3,5-dibromosalicylaldehyde [38] and 3,5-diiodosalicylaldehyde [39], where salicylaldehyde derivatives with one or more halogenates in the aromatic ring exhibit antibacterial and antifungal activity. The relevance of the development of such Schiff base compounds is emphasized by re-cent works [40-42] on the synthesis, characterization and study of the antimicrobial activity of Ni(II)-, Cu(II)- and Zn(II)-based complexes with halogenated aldehydes.

In this work, we have successfully synthesized two novel Schiff base Pd complexes based on 4-Methoxyaniline and aldehydes containing bromine or iodine atoms. The combination of these aldehydes and aniline was chosen for Schiff base synthesis for the first time. The two compounds obtained were extensively characterized by a combination of several methods. Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) and infrared (IR) spectroscopies were applied to define the functional groups



in the synthesized structures. X-ray diffraction (XRD) was used to confirm the formation of new crystalline phase. Molecular electronic transitions were determined from the UV-Vis spectroscopy of Schiff base ligands and the corresponding complexes. Synchrotron-based X-ray ab-sorption spectroscopy (XAS) was used to accurately describe the local atomic environment of palladium atoms in the new systems. Experimental data were supported by density functional theory (DFT) calculations.

## 2 Result and Discussion

## 2.1 Local structure of Pd(II) in C1-I and C2-Br



Scheme 1. General procedure for the preparation of newly synthesized compounds.

Scheme 1 demonstrated the proposed scheme for the formation of palladium complexes. To determine the atomic structure of the synthesized complexes, the synchrotron-quality XAS data was collected. The edge position and the shaping of the XANES region indicates Pd(II) sites in a square planar geometry. The Fourier-transformed (FT) EXAFS data also shows the similarity of the local environment of Pd atoms to that in Pd(II) acetate (Fig. 1). Fourier-analysis of EXAFS summarized in Table S1 indicates very close Pd–A distances of ca 2 Å in all studied samples, where A refers to either C, N, or O atoms which are poorly distinguishable by EXAFS (Fig. S1). However, there is a clear difference in both the XANES and EXAFS regions of the complexes from Pd(OAc)<sub>2</sub>, while the similarity between the formers indicates that new complexes were formed. Also, the well-defined higher shell contributions observed in EXAFS should originate from the well-ordered carbon atoms of the complexes. Both facts above unambiguously prove the formation of Pd-complexes with aldehydes.





**Fig. 1.** Pd *K*-edge FT-EXAFS data (phase-uncorrected) for the  $Pd(OAc)_2$  trimer (blue), C1-I (black) and C2-Br (dashed red). DFT-relaxed structure of newly synthesized complexes, where Pd atom is highlighted by gold color, C – grey, H – white, O – red, N – blue and Br or I – purple.

As the next step, we constructed the atomic models of the two complexes based on the initial guess, proposed in Scheme 1 for trans-coordinated complexes with square-planar Pd(II), and two cis-coordinated square-planar Pd(II) complexes. The geometries for the suggested models were relaxed at the DFT level of theory. In both cases, for iodine and bromine containing complexes, the trans-isomers are preferable (Fig. S2), the energy differences between cis- and trans-isomers are 3.9 and 4.5 kcal/mol for C1-I and C2-Br, respectively. The resulting structures (Fig. 1) were used for ab initio simulation of XANES spectra, which reproduced the same changes compared to the simulated Pd(OAc)<sub>2</sub> spectrum, as those observed in the experiment (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 1.** Experimental (a) and theoretical (b) Pd *K*-edge XANES spectra for trimer of Pd(II) acetate (blue), C1-I (black) and C2-Br (dashed red).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy. The main chemical shifts assigned in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of C1-I and C2-Br are shown in Table 1. The data were recorded in DMSO-d<sub>6</sub> due to its high dissolving power, and the simplicity of its own spectrum. Both spectra (Fig. S3 and Fig. S4) of the complexes are characterized by an overlap of the protons of the methoxy group signal with the signal of the protons of water ( $\delta$  3.70 ppm); therefore, the exact value of the chemical shift of these protons has not been established.



Sample	3H, OCH <sub>3</sub>	2Н, 6'-Н, 3'-Н	2Н, 2'-Н, 5'-Н	1H, H-5	1Н, 3-Н	1H, N=CH	
C1-I	3.70s	6.96d <sup>a</sup>	7.65d <sup>a</sup>	7.80d <sup>c</sup>	7.82d <sup>c</sup>	7.93s	
C2-Br	3.70s	6.96d <sup>b</sup>	7.49d <sup>b</sup>	7.57d <sup>d</sup>	7.67d <sup>d</sup>	7.99s	
$^{3}$ JHH = $^{a}$ 8.9 Hz, $^{b}$ 8.8 Hz							
$^{4}$ JHH = ° 2.3 Hz, <sup>d</sup> 2.5 Hz							

 Table 1. Chemical shifts (ppm) from <sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectra in DMSO-d<sub>6</sub> of C1-I and C2-Br.

From the gravimetrical **elemental analysis**, found atomic ratio of I:Pd in C1-I is equal to 3.79 and Br:Pd = 3.91 in C2-Br, which again confirms the structural models of the complexes.

According to the **powder XRD data analysis**, both complexes were crystallized, with the crystal different from the original ligands (Fig. S5). Both metal complexes are poorly soluble in water but soluble in DMSO.

#### 2.2 Optical and vibrational properties of Schiff base ligands and their Pd(II) complexes

The UV-Vis absorption properties of the ligands and their complexes were investigated upon their dissolution in DMSO at room temperature (Table 2). DMSO was chosen as a solvent for UV-Vis mainly because of its transparency in the range above 270 nm, since the calculated optical spectra for the proposed structures have shown that the most significant optical bands in the range of 300-470 nm. Moreover, DMSO is most often used when working with biological and medical objects, because it is less toxic than other common solvents with similar properties, such as HMPA and DMF. Since the most promising and preferable applications of new complexes are the antibacterial and antifungal ones, the characterization should be carried out under similar conditions. The experimental optical absorption spectra were compared with those simulated by DFT. The experimental absorption spectra of the complexes are in agreement with those reported elsewhere [43-46], where Pd(II) is also in square-planar coordination with two oxygen atoms and two nitrogen atoms. In Fig. 3, the calculated electronic transitions are highlighted by vertical lines with the height proportional to the oscillator strength, the theoretical absorption spectra were obtained by applying a Gaussian convolution with a constant full width at half maximum (FWHM) of 30 nm. The calculated wavelengths, vertical excitation energies, oscillator strengths, and percentage contributions of dominant electronic transitions for ligands and complexes are summarized in Table S2, along with the experimental transition wavelengths for comparison. Based on DFT results (Fig. S6), the spectral transitions have been assigned. The lowest energy transition in the Schiff ligands/complexes is an intraligand "phenol/phenoxide-to-imine" charge transfer (ILCT, broad). Then next is  $\pi \to \pi^*$  transitions (with a vibrational progression) on the aromatic rings. The d-d transitions are very weak and broad and are unlikely to be observed as peaks. The Pd-to-imine metal-to ligand-charge transfer (MLCT) is broad and weak, and, since the Pd(II) ions do not oxidize easily, it is at higher energy. The charge transfer between the halogen group and the phenyl ring (XLCT) also at still higher energy.

The optical band gap ( $E_g$ ) values for the ligands and complexes were estimated from the experimental UV-Vis spectra by the Tauc plot method (Fig. S7). The values obtained for L1-I and C1-I were found to be 2.35 eV and 2.36, respectively. For L2-Br and C2-Br,  $E_g$  was determined as 2.28 and 2.38 eV, respectively. Fig. 4 represents the computed energy level diagrams of the boundary molecular orbitals (MO) for the Schiff base ligands and their complexes. The diagrams were constructed from the analysis of the DFT calculation results. The energy gap was evaluated as the difference between the highest occupied MO (HOMO) and the lowest unoccupied MO (LUMO).

**Table 2.** The UV-Vis absorption bands ( $\lambda_{exp}$ ) and molar attenuation coefficient ( $\epsilon$ ) of the ligands and its Pd(II) complexes in

DMSO solution at room temperature.

Sample	$\lambda_{\text{exp}}, \text{nm} (\varepsilon, \times 10^4 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1})$						
L1-I	324 (1130.57)	343 (1196.87)	365 (1273.64)	382 (1332.96)	445 (1552.79)		
L2-Br	_	343 (1362.78)	365 (1450.19)	383 (1521.71)	446 (1772.02)		
C1-I	323 (2416.13)	_	_	_	419 (3134.24)		
C2-Br	318 (5671.63)	_	_	_	414 (7383.82)		



**Fig. 2.** Experimental (a) and theoretical (b) UV-Vis spectra for ligands (dashed lines) L1-I (light gray) and L2-Br (pink) and complexes (solid lines) C1-I (gray) and C2-Br (red). Vertical bars represent individual calculated electronic transitions with the height proportional to the oscillator strength (the color code is the same as the lines).

**ANS** 







**Infrared spectra.** To study the vibrational properties, FTIR spectra of the complexes were compared with the FTIR spectra of ligands and computed vibrational spectra (Fig. 4). Both complexes containing bromine and iodine have similar spectra. Strong absorption peaks in the region  $1090 - 1520 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  were assigned to the bending C–H modes and stretching C=N, C=C and C=O modes.

Comparing the spectra of the ligands with that of the corresponding metal complexes, no significant shifts were found. The list of bands association is presented in Table 3 together with theoretically calculated vibrational modes. New bands are found in the spectra of the complexes in the 500–600 cm<sup>-1</sup> region, which are assigned to v(Pd-O), and 400–500 cm<sup>-1</sup> region to (Pd–N) stretching vibrations for metal complexes [47]. The maximum intensity of the absorption band near 1360 cm<sup>-1</sup> is assigned to C=C stretching vibrations in the aromatic rings together with v(C-O).



**Fig. 4.** Experimental (a) and computed (b) FTIR spectra of complexes (solid lines) C1-I (gray) and C2-Br (red) and ligands (dashed lines) L1-I (light gray) and L2-Br (light red).

Experimental					Simulated			
Assignment	L1-I	L2-Br	C1-I	C2-Br	L1-I	L2-Br	C1-I	C2-Br
ν(C–H)	3066-2895	3084-2870	3074-2843	3078-2856	3126-2914	3130-2910	3122-2916	3123-2915
$\nu$ (C=N)	1612-1500	1615-1508	1606-1508	1606-1496	1588-1485	1594-1475	1578–1528,	1578–1538,
							1365-1303	1389–1356
$\nu$ (C=C)	1612-1500	1615-1508	1606-1508	1606-1496	1588-1485	1594–1475	1578-1528	1578-1538
δ(О–Н)	1430-1300	1433-1300			1533-1350	1594–1354		
δ(C-H)	1430-1352	1433-1345	1420-1302	1433-1310	1464-1210	1464-1212	1477-1296	1478-1214
v(C–O)	1351-1261	1345-1254	1327-1244	1361-1240	1424-1360	1398-1223	1384-1218	1389-1276
δ(C=N)	1153	1159	1149	1149	876	1140	849	853
$\nu(-OCH_3)$	1016	1021	1030	1028	995	993	995	996
δ(C=C)	1012	1017	1025	1025	985	741	986	986
v(Pd–N)	_	—	400-500	400-500			849-762	764-717
v(Pd–O)	_	_	500-600	500-600			643	629-559
ν(C–I)	652	_	632	_	587		579-518	
v(C–Br)	_	682	-	678		602		628-517

Table 3. IR frequencies (cm<sup>-1</sup>) for ligands L1-I, L2-Br, and complexes C1-I, C2-Br.

Two Schiff base ligands and their palladium(II) complexes have been successfully synthesized using known condensation technique [47-49], however certain aldehydes and amines chosen for the synthesis were used for the first time. The main feature of the obtained materials is the presence in their structure of metal ions and halogens at once [50]. An extensive study by XAS, NMR, FTIR and UV-Vis spectroscopies made it possible to confirm the formation of complexes, as well as to determine their local features. The correlation of IR spectrometry data with theoretical data is consistent with the results presented for similar complexes in the former studies [42, 46].

Formation of Pd-ligands bonding in complexes significantly changes the electronic spectra since the molecular orbital of the entire molecule changes, which means that charge transfer occurs between its other parts [51, 52].

## **3 Experimental Procedure**

#### 3.1 Synthesis

Schiff base ligands were synthesized by a typical condensation of 4-Methoxyaniline and aldehydes in ethanol [53]

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**Ligand 1 (L1-I).** The solution of 0.12 g (0.98 mmol) 4-Methoxyaniline in 5 mL ethanol was added to the hot solution of 0.37 g (0.98 mmol) 3,5-Diiodosalicylaldehyde in 5 mL ethanol. An orange precipitate was immediately observed. The mixture was boiled for 3 hours. The product was then filtered, washed with boiling ethanol and ether, and dried under vacuum. Final product: orange fine crystalline. Yield: 0.35 g (74%). Melting point ( $T_{mp}$ ) = 158 °C. Determined molecular weight, %: C 35.40; H 2.50; I 52.50; N 3.30. A chemical formula of the L1-I is C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>11</sub>I<sub>2</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>. Theoretical molecular weight, %: C 35.11; H 2.29; I 52.99; N 2.92. Molecular mass (m) = 478.94 g/mol.

**Ligand 2 (L2-Br).** A solution of 0.14 g (1.14 mmol) 4-Methoxyaniline in 5 mL ethanol was added to the hot solution of 0.32 g (1.14 mmol) 3,5-Dibromosalicylaldehyde in 5 mL ethanol. Three drops of formic acid, acting as a catalyst, were added to the resulting orange solution and refluxed for 4.5 hours. The formed precipitate was separated, washed with ethanol, and recrystallized from 11 mL of ethanol. Final product: orange crystals. Yield: 0.34 g (77%).  $T_{mp} = 119$  °C. Determined molecular weight, %: C 43.90; H 2.40; Br 41.90; N 3.30. A chemical formula of the L2-Br is C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>11</sub>Br<sub>2</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>. Theoretical molecular weight, %: C 43.67; H 2.86; Br 41.51; N 3.64. m = 384.94 g/mol.

**Complex 1 (C1-I)** (2,4-diiodo-6-(((4-methoxyphenyl)imino)methyl) palladium (II) phenolate). The solution of 0.063 g (0.14 mmol) trimer palladium acetate (II) in 4 mL acetone was added to the hot suspension of 0.27 g (0.28 mmol) L1-I in 6 mL acetone. After 10 min of boiling an orange crystalline product was formed. The mixture was boiled for 4 hours. The precipitate was separated, washed with boiling acetone and methanol, and dried in a vacuum. Final product: orange crystals. Yield: 0.22 g (76%). Determined molecular weight, %: C 31.90; H 1.50; I 47.40; N 2.90; Pd 10.50. A chemical formula of the C1-I is  $C_{28}H_{20}I_4N_2O_4Pd$ . Theoretical molecular weight, %: C 31.66; H 1.88; I 47.78; N 2.64; Pd 10.02. m = 1062.28 g/mol.

**Complex 2 (C2-Br)** (2,4-dibromo-6-(((4-methoxyphenyl)imino)methyl) palladium (II) phenolate): the solution of 0.073 g (0.15 mmol) trimer palladium acetate (II) in 4 mL acetone was added to the hot suspension of 0.25 g (0.30 mmol) L2-Br in 6 mL acetone. A solution changed its color to red. The mixture was boiled for 4 hours. The precipitate was separated, washed with boiling acetone and methanol and dried in a vacuum. Final product: orange crystals. Yield: 0.2 g (71%). Determined molecular weight, %: C 38.60; H 2.40; Br 36.10; N 3.60; Pd 12.30. A chemical formula of the C2-Br is  $C_{28}H_{20}Br_4N_2O_4Pd$ . Theoretical molecular weight, %: C 38.46; H 2.29; Br 36.55; N 3.20; Pd 12.17. *m* = 874.28 g/mol.

### 3.2 Characterization

**Elemental analysis** of C, H, N elements were carried out on Carlo Erba TCM 480 equipment using sulfanilamide as a reference. The metal content was determined gravimetrically in the analytical laboratory of the Institute of Physical and Organic Chemistry (SFedU, Rostov-on-Don, Russia). Melting points were measured on a Kofler table.

**NMR data.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance DPX-250 spectrometer with working frequencies of 250 MHz at 25 °C in  $d_6$ -DMSO.

**XRD** measurements were carried out on the Bruker D2 PHASER diffractometer in Bragg–Brentano geometry with Cu K $\alpha_{1,2}$  radiation ( $\lambda = 1.5406$  Å). X-ray diffraction data were collected in the range from 10 to 50° with 0.05° step and 0.2 s acquisition time.

**Pd K-edge XAS** spectra were collected at STM beamline of National Research Center "Kurchatov Institute" (Moscow, Russia). Pelletized samples were measured in the transmission mode by step scanning of Si(220) channel-cut monochromator from 24.0 to 25.4 keV. For C1-I and C2-Br samples, 4 scans, taking around 13 min each, were measured and averaged. Pd(II) acetate (Pd(OAc)<sub>2</sub>) and Pd foil were measured as reference samples. Data processing and the first-shell Fourier-analysis of extended X-ray absorption fine structure (EXAFS) region was performed in Demeter software [54].

**FTIR spectra** of attenuated total reflectance (ATR) mode were measured on a Bruker Vertex 70 spectrometer equipped with a Bruker Platinum ATR accessory with a diamond crystal. Spectra were collected with resolution of 1 cm<sup>-1</sup> using a mercuric cadmium telluride (MCT) detector in range from 5000 to 500 cm<sup>-1</sup> cooled by liquid nitrogen and in range from 5000 to 30 cm<sup>-1</sup> using deuterated triglycine sulfate (DTGS) detector. Background spectra were collected on air with empty crystal of ATR accessory before each measurement.

**UV-Vis spectra** were measured on Shimadzu UV-2600 spectrophotometer. An ISR-2600Plus integrating sphere was used for the measurements in diffuse reflectance mode. Two 5-mm quartz cuvettes were filled with a sample dissolved in DMSO and pure DMSO as a reference. The spectral acquisition was performed with a 0.5 nm step in a range 900–190 nm. Atomic models and theoretical vibrational and optical spectra of the synthesized complexes and palladium(II) acetate were obtained in ADF code [55, 56] using Grimme DFT-D4 dispersion correction with the electronegativity equilibrium model in B3LYP Hybrid exchange-correlation (XC) functional and all-electron TZP (Triple Z, 1 polarization function) basic set. Spinorbit coupling was also considered. Theoretical X-ray absorption near edge structure (XANES) spectra were calculated for the obtained models using a full potential finite difference method implemented in FDMNES code [57]. All calculations were performed with relativistic corrections and the radius of the computational sphere of 7 Å. The energy ranges were limited to 24.27 - 24.48 keV for Pd *K*-edge.

## **4** Conclusion

We have successfully synthesized two novel Schiff base complexes with palladium and determined their structure, optical and vibrational properties. Both complexes exhibit 4-coordinated Pd(II) centers bonded with nitrogen and oxygen atoms of the aldehydes, which was unambiguously proven by extensive experimental and theoretical analysis. The use of synchrotron-based X-ray absorption spectroscopy, which is not a widely accessible and frequently used technique to study such complexes, provided unambiguous proof of the 3D local atomic structure around the Pd atoms. MLCT, ILCT, and XLCT transitions in the optical spectra of the complexes were identified. The band gap of the synthesized ligands and their complexes ranges from 2.28 to 2.38 eV but is higher for iodine-containing materials.

An important feature of the complexes obtained is that in addition to Pd, they also contain Br or I, with a ratio of 4:1 in relation to palladium, since the halogenated salicylaldehydes was previously shown to have antiviral and antibacterial properties [38-41]. Another possible application is their use as organic ligands for functionalization of porous supports by Pd for the use in catalysis. In this case, bromine and iodine can be used to track the homogeneity of the ligand distribution prior to the introduction of Pd.

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