Contributions to the Chemistry of Organoselenium Compounds

PhD Thesis Abstract

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## Contents

Abbreviations, acronyms and symbols ................................................................. 5

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 6

2. Literature data .................................................................................................. 10

   2.1. Organoselenium compounds with intramolecular coordination ............ 11

       2.1.1. Diorgano diselenium(I) compounds, R-Se-Se-R ............................. 11

           2.1.1.1. Preparation ............................................................................ 14

           2.1.1.2. NMR spectroscopy ................................................................. 16

           2.1.1.3. IR spectroscopy ...................................................................... 17

           2.1.1.4. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ................................ 17

       2.1.2. Organoselenium(II) halides .............................................................. 21

           2.1.2.1. Preparation ............................................................................. 23

           2.1.2.2. NMR spectroscopy ................................................................. 24

           2.1.2.3. IR spectroscopy ..................................................................... 25

           2.1.2.4. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ................................. 25

2.2. Metal selenolates ......................................................................................... 28

   2.2.1. Organoselenium precursors ............................................................... 28

       2.2.1.1. Preparation ............................................................................... 29

       2.2.1.2. NMR spectroscopy ................................................................ 31

       2.2.1.3. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ................................ 32

       2.2.2. Group 4 metal selenolates ............................................................... 36

           2.2.2.1. Preparation ............................................................................. 37

           2.2.2.2. NMR spectroscopy ................................................................. 40

           2.2.2.3. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ................................. 41

       2.2.3. Group 12 metal selenolates ............................................................... 43

           2.2.3.1. Preparation ............................................................................. 45

           2.2.3.2. NMR spectroscopy ................................................................. 46

           2.2.3.3. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ................................ 47

3. Original contributions ...................................................................................... 50

   3.1. Overview .................................................................................................... 51

   3.2. Diorgano diselenium(I) compounds ......................................................... 52

       3.2.1. Preparation .................................................................................... 52

       3.2.2. NMR spectroscopy ...................................................................... 55

       3.2.3. IR spectroscopy .......................................................................... 57

       3.2.4. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ...................................... 58

   3.3. Organoselenium(II) halides ..................................................................... 63

       3.3.1. Preparation .................................................................................... 63

       3.3.2. NMR spectroscopy ...................................................................... 63

       3.3.3. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ...................................... 66

       3.3.4. Theoretical calculations ................................................................. 74

   3.4. Metal selenolates ...................................................................................... 77

       3.4.1. Organoselenium precursors ........................................................... 77

           3.4.1.1. Preparation ............................................................................ 77
3.4.1.2. NMR spectroscopy ........................................................................................................... 79
3.4.2. Zirconium selenolates ............................................................................................................ 83
3.4.2.1. Preparation ....................................................................................................................... 83
3.4.2.2. NMR spectroscopy .......................................................................................................... 84
3.4.3. Group 12 metal selenolates ................................................................................................ 85
3.4.3.1. Preparation ....................................................................................................................... 85
3.4.3.2. NMR spectroscopy .......................................................................................................... 87
3.4.3.3. Mass spectrometry ........................................................................................................... 91
3.4.3.4. IR spectroscopy ................................................................................................................ 93
3.4.3.5. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies ........................................................................... 93
3.5. Serendipitous coupling products .............................................................................................. 102
3.5.1. Preparation ........................................................................................................................ 102
3.5.2. NMR spectroscopy .............................................................................................................. 103
3.5.3. Mass spectrometry .............................................................................................................. 104
3.5.4. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies .............................................................................. 105
4. Experimental part ......................................................................................................................... 107
4.1. Materials and procedures ......................................................................................................... 108
4.2. Diorgano diselenium(I) compounds .......................................................................................... 110
4.2.1. Preparation of [2-{Me₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]Li (1) ............................................................................ 110
4.2.2. Preparation of [2-{Me₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]₂Se (2) ........................................................................ 110
4.2.3. Preparation of [2-{Et₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]Br (3) ............................................................................ 111
4.2.4. Preparation of [2-{Et₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]Li (4) ............................................................................ 111
4.2.5. Preparation of [2-{Et₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (5) ......................................................................... 112
4.2.6. Preparation of [2-{Pr₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]Br (6) ............................................................................ 113
4.2.7. Preparation of [2-{Pr₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]₂Se (7) .......................................................................... 114
4.2.8. Preparation of [2-{(CH₃)₂CH}C₆H₄]Li (8) ............................................................................ 115
4.2.9. Preparation of [2-{(CH₂O)₂CH}C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (9) ................................................................. 115
4.2.10. Preparation [2-{OCH}C₆H₄]₂Se (10) .................................................................................. 116
4.2.11. Preparation of [2-{PhCH₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (11) ............................................................ 117
4.2.12. Preparation of [[2,6-{Pr₂CN₆H₄}NCH]C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (12) ...................................................... 118
4.2.13. Preparation of [2-{OCH₂CH₂N(CH₃)₂NCH}C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (13) .......................................... 119
4.2.14. Preparation of [2-{Me₂N(CH₂)₂NCH}C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (14) ................................................... 120
4.3. Organoselenium(II) halides ..................................................................................................... 121
4.3.1. Preparation of [2-{Et₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]SeCl (15) .................................................................... 121
4.3.2. Preparation of [2-{Et₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]SeBr (16) .................................................................... 122
4.3.3. Preparation of [2-{Et₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]SeNa (17) .................................................................... 123
4.4. Metal selenolates ....................................................................................................................... 124
4.4.1. Organoselenium precursors ............................................................................................... 124
4.4.1.1. Preparation of [2-{Me₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]SeNa (18) .............................................................. 124
4.4.1.2. Preparation of [2-{Me₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]SeSiMe₃ (19) .......................................................... 125
4.4.1.3. Preparation of [2-{Et₂NCH₂}C₆H₄]SeNa (20) ............................................................... 126
4.4.1.4. Preparation of [2-{PhCH₂NCH}C₆H₄]SeK (21) ............................................................. 127
4.4.1.5. Preparation of [2-{(2,4-Pr₂CN₆H₄}NCH)C₆H₄]SeNa (22) ............................................. 128
4.4.2. Zirconium selenolates .......................................................................................................... 129
0.4.2.1. Preparation of \[[2-(\text{PhCH}_2\text{NCH})\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{Se}]_2\text{ZrCp}_2\ (23)\] .......................................................... 129

4.4.2.2. Preparation of \[[([2,6'-\text{Pr}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{NCH})\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{Se}]_2\text{ZrCp}_2\ (24) ........................................... 130

4.4.3. Group 12 metal selenolates ......................................................................................................................... 131

4.4.3.1. Preparation of \[2-(\text{Me}_2\text{NCH}_2)\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{Se}]_2\text{Zn} (25) .................................................................................. 131

4.4.3.2. Preparation of \[2-(\text{Me}_2\text{NCH}_2)\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{Se}]_2\text{Cd} (26) ........................................................................... 132

4.4.3.3. Preparation of \[2-(\text{Et}_2\text{NCH}_2)\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{Se}]_2\text{Zn} (27) .............................................................................. 133

4.4.3.4. Preparation of \[2-(\text{Et}_2\text{NCH}_2)\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{Se}]_2\text{Cd} (28) .............................................................................. 134

4.4.3.5. Preparation of \[[2-(\text{PhCH}_2\text{NCH})\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{Se}]_2\text{Zn} (29) ........................................................................... 135

4.4.3.6. Preparation of \[[[2,6'-\text{Pr}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{NCH}]\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{Se}]_2\text{Zn} (30) ............................................................. 136

4.5. Serendipitous coupling products .................................................................................................................. 138

4.5.1. Preparation of \[9,10-[[2,6'-\text{Pr}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{NH}]_2-9',10'-\text{H}_2\text{-C}_{14}\text{H}_8\] (31) .................................................................................. 138

4.5.2. Preparation of \[9,10-[[\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{CH}_2]\text{NH}]_2-9',10'-\text{H}_2\text{-C}_{14}\text{H}_8\] (32) ........................................................................... 139

5. Conclusions ....................................................................................................................................................... 140

Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................................................. 143

Appendix ............................................................................................................................................................... 144

Curriculum Vitae .................................................................................................................................................. 150

Key words: organometallic compounds, hypervalent compounds, organoselenium, intramolecular coordination
3. Original contributions

3.1. Overview

This chapter presents the contributions brought to the chemistry of hypervalent organoselenium compounds and metal selenolates within the research performed in order to elaborate the present thesis. The results obtained can be divided in three main subchapters according to the approached class of compounds:

- **Diorgano diselenium(I) compounds**
  Compounds from this class have attracted considerable interest in the last decade mainly due to their biological activity or to their use in organic synthesis. Our interest in new diorgano diselenium(I) compounds is due to their utility as starting materials in the chemistry of organoselenium(II) halides and metal selenolates.

- **Organoselenium(II) halides**
  Compounds from this class are useful reagents in organic synthesis. More recently organoselenium(II) chlorides have been used to prepare selenolates of the type \( \text{ZnCl(SeR)} \)\textsuperscript{125} thus offering new perspectives regarding the preparation of air-stable organometallic zinc compounds with potential catalytic activity.

- **Metal selenolates**
  Selenolates of Ti and Zr are a very poorly described class of compounds in literature. Such compounds can be considered as third class Ziegler-Natta catalysts. Selenolates of the type \( (\text{RSe})_2\text{MCl}_2 \) (M = Ti, Zr) are expected to have catalytical activity in the polymerization of 1-alkenes.
  Zinc- and cadmium selenides deposited as thin films have semiconducting properties. Such thin films can be obtained by MOCVD which can use as Single Source Precursors Group 12 metal selenolates.
3.2. Diorgano diselenium(I) compounds

3.2.1. Preparation

[2-(Me₂NCH₂)C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (2) has been prepared according to a procedure described in the literature.²⁰ The new diselenide [2-(Et₂NCH₂)C₆H₄]₂Se₂ (5) has been prepared similarly by ortho-lithiation of the organic ligand followed by reaction with elemental selenium of the resulting lithium derivative [2-(Et₂NCH₂)C₆H₄]Li. Hydrolysis of the lithium selenolate to selenol followed by aerial oxidation of the latter yielded the desired diselenide 5.

![Scheme 24.]

2-bromobenzaldehyde was transformed into the corresponding acetal by refluxing in toluene with ethylene glycol using a Dien-Stark trap.

Compounds 11-14 were prepared by simple condensation between 10 and the corresponding amines. It was found that nor reaction in dichloromethane in presence of an anhydrous salt like Na₂SO₄ or refluxing in toluene with a Dean-Stark trap with or without acid catalyst, did not yield any condensation product. The unreacted starting materials could be quantitatively recovered in all cases. The desired condensation reactions were found to take place in acetetonitrile without using TosOH or anhydrous Na₂SO₄.
3.2.2. NMR spectroscopy

$^1$H NMR spectroscopy was used to identify compounds $^2$20, $^3$126, $^6$127, $^9$25 and $^{10}$39 which have already been reported in the literature. In the case of the new compounds $^5$, $^7$ and $^{11-14}$ the assignment of resonances in the $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra was made with the aid of 2D NMR (HSQC, HMBC and COSY) correlation spectra. The aliphatic region of [2-(Et$_2$NCH$_2$)C$_6$H$_4$]$_2$Se$_2$ ($^5$) displays as expected a triplet resonance for the methyl protons of the ethyl group ($\delta$ 1.05 ppm), a quartet for the methylene protons of the ethyl group ($\delta$ 2.61 ppm) and a singlet for the methylene protons of the pendant arm ($\delta$ 3.72 ppm). The aromatic region consists of a very deshielded resonance corresponding to the protons in the ortho position to selenium ($\delta$ 7.79 ppm).
ppm) and another broad multiplet resonance (δ 7.13 ppm) corresponding to the remaining three non-equivalent protons of the phenyl ring.

Figure 16. $^1$H NMR spectra of compounds 5 (up) and 7 (down)

In the case of compound 7 the aliphatic region shows the expected heptet (δ 2.61 ppm) and doublet (δ 1.09 ppm) resonances for the iso-propyl group. In the aromatic region the most deshielded resonance (δ 7.72 ppm) corresponds to the protons H$_6$, while the resonance at δ 7.30 ppm is due to the protons H$_3$ (Figure 16, down). The multiplet resonance at δ 7.11 ppm is due to the remaining two aromatic protons.
Figure 17. $^1$H NMR spectra of the reaction products of 10 with 2,6-diisopropylaniline in toluene using a Dean-Stark trap in the presence of TosOH (up) and in acetonitrile, no catalyst (down).

$^1$H NMR was used to monitor the reaction between aldehyde 10 and 2,6-diisopropylaniline until condensation was achieved. Figure 17 shows the $^1$H NMR spectra of the products of this reaction after 24h of refluxing in toluene using a Dean-Stark trap (up) and after two hours of refluxing in acetonitrile (down). In the first case the presence of the characteristic resonance for the -CHO proton of the aldehyde ($\delta$ 10.16 ppm) and the resonance at $\delta$ 3.77 ppm corresponding to the –NH$_2$ protons of the 2,6-diisopropylamine show that no reaction took place. When the reaction was carried out in acetonitrile the absence of the signals corresponding to the protons of the –CHO and the –NH$_2$ groups, respectively, indicates full conversion of the starting materials to the desired imine 12 with a characteristic –CH=N- resonance at $\delta$ 8.67 ppm. Similarly, in the case of diselenides 11, 13 and 14 the $^1$H NMR spectra clearly show the formation of the carbon-nitrogen double bond due to the upfield shift observed for the CH proton from 10.16 ppm (aldehyde) to $\delta$ 8.67 (11), 8.53 (13), 8.57 (14) ppm (imine).

3.2.4. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies

Suitable crystals for single-crystal X-ray diffraction have been obtained for diselenides 5, 7 and 11.
Intramolecular selenium–nitrogen interactions of significant strength are established in the diselenide 5 \([N1 \cdots Se1 \ 2.713(5) \text{ and } N2 \cdots Se2 \ 3.068(6) \ \text{Å}] [\Sigma r_{vdW} (Se,N) \ 3.54 \ \text{Å}]\). 43

**Figure 18.** ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for isomer \([R_{N1},S_{N2}]\)-5 (hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity)

**Figure 19.** ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for isomer \([S_{N1},S_{N2}]\)-7 (hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity)

The intramolecular N→Se coordination results in five-membered SeC₃N rings, folded along the imaginary Se···C₂₃ axis, with nitrogens displaced out of the best SeC₃ planes. This induces planar chirality, with nitrogen as pilot atom and the aromatic ring as chiral plane, similarly to the situation described for other related diselenides. As a consequence the compound crystallizes as a racemate consisting of 1:1 mixtures of \((R_{N1},S_{N2})\) and \((S_{N1},R_{N2})\) isomers, with respect to the two chelate rings in a molecular unit.

As a result of the strong intramolecular N→Se coordination in 7 \([N1 \cdots Se1 \ 2.955(6) \text{ and } N2 \cdots Se2 \ 2.958(5) \ \text{Å}]\) the geometry around each selenium atom is distorted T-shaped. Compound 7 crystallizes as a racemate consisting of a 1:1 mixture of \((S_{N1},S_{N2})\) and \((R_{N1},R_{N2})\) isomers, with respect to the two chelate rings in a molecular unit.
The strong intramolecular selenium–nitrogen interactions for the compound 11 [N1⋯Se1 2.795(2) Å and N2⋯Se2 2.650(2) Å] are similar to those found for new compounds 5 and 7.

Compound 11 crystallizes as diastereoisomer E regarding both -C=N- double bonds. The sum of the angles around each nitrogen atom [360.0(2)° for N1 and 359.6(2)° for N2] is consistent with a trigonal planar geometry and sp² hybridization of the nitrogen atom. Also the five-membered chelate ring formed by intramolecular coordination is planar. Hence the planar chirality existing in the amino derivatives 5 and 7 is absent in the imino derivative 11.

3.3. Organoselenium(II) halides

3.3.4. Preparation

[2-(Et₂NCH₂)C₆H₄]SeCl (15) was prepared by oxidative cleavage of the Se-Se bond with stoechiometric amounts of sulphuryl chloride according to the reaction in Scheme 28.
3.3.5. NMR spectroscopy

Solution behavior of the organoselenium halides was investigated using multinuclear NMR spectroscopy. $^1$H NMR spectra of the products confirms the proposed structures. In all three cases resonances are shifted when comparing to the starting diselenide 5. $^1$H NMR spectra of the chloride 15, bromide 16 and iodide 17 are shown in Figure 24.

![Figure 24. $^1$H NMR spectra of 15 (up), 16 (middle), 17 (down)](image)

The aromatic region of the $^1$H NMR spectra of the three halides exhibit a very deshielded doublet resonance for the protons in ortho position to selenium. Protons $H_3$, $H_4$, and $H_5$ are grouped differently in all three cases but it is worth noting that in the case of bromide 16 all non equivalent aromatic protons have well resolved corresponding resonances.

An interesting feature in the aliphatic region of the $^1$H NMR spectra of all three compounds is that the two protons of the methylene group of the ethyl groups attached to nitrogen are non equivalent. As a result a complex ABX type pattern is observed for these diastereotopic protons. For a better understanding of this pattern a theoretical interpretation was proposed and simulations were carried out for the protons in position 8 of compounds 15 and 16.
3.3.6. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies

Single-crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction analysis were obtained by slow diffusion of n-hexane into a CH₂Cl₂ solution of 15 or 16. Both chloride 15 and bromide 16 crystallize with two independent, very similar, molecules (15a / b and 16a / b, respectively) in the unit cell and therefore we will refer only to molecules 15a and 16a in the subsequent discussion. The molecular structures are shown in Figures 25 and 26. Selected interatomic distances and angles are listed in Table 15.

The molecules of both 15 and 16 exhibit strong internal coordination of the nitrogen atom from the pendant arm to the selenium centre, trans to the selenium–halogen bond [N(1)–Se(1)–Cl(1) 175.45(9)° in 15a; N(1)–Se(1)–Br(1) 175.53(9)° in 16a].

The resulted coordination geometry around the selenium centre is a distorted T-shaped (C,N)SeX core (X = Cl, Br) and thus compounds 15 and 16 can be described as neutral, hypervalent 10-Se-3 species.¹³⁰,¹³¹

The deviation from the ideal N–Se–X angle of 180° is due to the constraints imposed by the coordinated amine arm. The strength of the internal N→Se interaction [Se(1)–N(1) 2.182(3) Å in

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Figure 25. ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for isomers $R_{N1}$-15a (left) and $R_{N2}$-15b (right)

Figure 26. ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for isomers $S_{N1}$-16a (left) and $R_{N2}$-16b (right)
The crystals of 15 and 16 contain a 1:1 mixture of (R\text{N}1)-15a / (S\text{N}1)-15a and (R\text{N}2)-15b / (S\text{N}2)-15b isomers and (R\text{N}1)-16a / (S\text{N}1)-16a and (R\text{N}2)-16b / (S\text{N}2)-16b isomers, respectively.

Intra- and intermolecular halogen-hydrogen contacts were observed in the crystals of 15 and 16. The strong intramolecular halogen-hydrogen interaction is obviously the result of the internal N→Se interaction which brings the aromatic hydrogen ortho to the selenium atom in the close proximity of the halogen in the molecular unit [Cl(1)···H(6) 2.61 Å in 15a; Br(1)···H(6) 2.77 Å in 16a].

In the case of the adduct 15·HCl the nitrogen atom of the pendant arm is protonated [the H1 atom was localized from the electron density map] and therefore it is not interacting with selenium. The chlorine atoms are attached to selenium trans to each other [Cl1–Se1–Cl2 176.71(4)°]. The Cl1–Se1–Cl2 system is asymmetric, the presence of a second halogen atom bonded to the chalcogen centre at a significantly long distance [Se1–Cl2 2.6078(13) Å] resulting in a considerable shortening of the Se1–Cl1 bond [2.3021(13) Å] in comparison to the value found for 15 [Se1–Cl1 2.4338(15) Å]. The adduct 15·HCl can thus be described as a zwitterionic compound of the type [2-\{Et2N(H)CH2\}C6H4]SeCl2−, with a distorted T-shaped CSeCl2 core (ionic, hypervalent 10-Se-3 species Error! Bookmark not defined. Error! Bookmark not defined.). A Cl2···H1 hydrogen bond [2.30(2) Å] is established intramolecularly and presumably it is responsible for the long Se1–Cl2 distance, compared to the Se1–Cl1 bond length, and for the asymmetry of the Cl–Se–Cl system.

3.4. Metal selenolates

3.4.1. Organoselenium precursors

3.4.1.1. Preparation

Sodium selenolates 18 and 20 were prepared by reductive cleavage of the selenium-selenium bond in compounds 2 and 5, respectively, with sodium. For this purpose, a THF
solution of the corresponding diorgano diselenium(I) compound was added to a sodium mirror (large excess) under inert atmosphere. The resulting selenolates 18 and 20 were isolated in very good yields as colorless solids.

Scheme 29.

The trimethylsilyl derivative 19 was prepared by the metathesis reaction between sodium selenolate 18 and trimethylsilyl-chloride in a 1 : 1.1 ratio. After separation of the resulted NaCl the product was isolated in very good yield as a pasty off-white solid.

Potassium selenolate 21 was prepared by reductive cleavage of the selenium-selenium bond of the corresponding diselenide 11 using 2 molar equivalents of potassium tri-sec-butyl hydroborate (K-Selectride) (Scheme 30).

Scheme 30.

Scheme 31.
A reduction using a sodium mirror was also attempted for compounds 11 and 12 but results were unexpected and they will be discussed in Chapter 3.5 of the present thesis. Successful reduction of diselenide 12 was achieved using stoechiometric amounts of sodium sand to yield sodium selenolate 22 (Scheme 31).

3.4.1.2. NMR spectroscopy

$^1$H NMR spectra were recorded in THF-d8 for the selenolates 18, 20, 21 and 22 and in C$_6$D$_6$ for compound 19. $^{13}$C NMR was recorded for compounds 18-20.

![Figure 35. $^1$H NMR spectrum of [2-(Me$_2$NCH$_2$)C$_6$H$_4$]SeNa (18)](image)

Figure 35 shows the $^1$H NMR spectrum of [2-(Me$_2$NCH$_2$)C$_6$H$_4$]SeNa (18). As expected the aliphatic region displays two singlet resonances corresponding to the protons of the methyl ($\delta$ 2.17 ppm) and the methylene ($\delta$ 3.53 ppm) groups respectively. The aliphatic region of the $^1$H NMR spectrum of [2-(Me$_2$NCH$_2$)C$_6$H$_4$]SeSiMe$_3$ (19) (Figure 36) displays a similar pattern to that of compound 18 having in addition a very shielded resonance corresponding to the protons of the trimethylsilyl moiety.

The potassium selenolate 21 has been characterized by $^1$H NMR in THF-d8 (Figure 39).

To avoid over-reduction, the selenium-selenium bond in [((2,6-$^3$Pr$_2$C$_6$H$_4$)NCH)$_2$C$_6$H$_4$]$_2$Se$_2$ (12) was reduced/cleaved with stoechiometric amount of Na sand. The reaction was monitored for 15 days in an NMR tube in THF-d8. Figure 40 shows the $^1$H NMR spectra of the strating diselenide 12 (up) and of the resulting sodium selenolate 22 (down).
Figure 36. $^1$H NMR spectrum of \([2-(\text{Me}_2\text{NCH}_2)\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{SeSiMe}_3\) (19)

Figure 37. $^1$H NMR spectrum of \([2-(\text{Et}_2\text{NCH}_2)\text{C}_6\text{H}_4]\text{SeNa}\) (20)

Figure 39. $^1$H NMR spectrum of 21 in THF-d8
Figure 40. $^1$H NMR spectra of diselenide 12 (up) and sodium selenolate 22 (down)

3.4.2. Zirconium selenolates

3.4.2.1. Preparation

Scheme 32.
For the preparation of zirconocene selenolates two synthetic approaches were considered. The first approach consists of reductive cleavage of the selenium-selenium bond of a diorgano diselenium(I) compound with the *in situ* generated Zr(II) species [Cp₂Zr] while the second approach consists of the metathesis reactions between Cp₂ZrCl₂ and the corresponding potassium selenolates.

Zirconocene was prepared by reacting Cp₂ZrCl₂ with two equivalents of butyllithium at low temperature, followed by reductive elimination of two butyl groups (as butane and butene) at consequent warming to room temperature (Scheme 32).

The resulting dark brown solids 23 and 24 are extremely air-sensitive. Any attempts of purification and recrystallization lead to their decomposition.

3.4.2.2. NMR spectroscopy

The zirconocene selenolates 23 and 24 were characterized by ¹H NMR spectroscopy in C₆D₆. Figure 41 shows the ¹H NMR spectra of compound 23 obtained by *direct synthesis* (up) and by a metatethic pathway (down). At first glance it is clear that the direct method using [Cp₂Zr] yields a compound with greater purity. The most upfield resonance at δ 4.63 ppm corresponds to the protons of the methylene group of the benzyl moiety. The singlet resonance at δ 5.55 ppm is due to the ten equivalent protons of the two ciclopentadienyl rings. In the aromatic region two multiplet signals correspond to the H₃/₆ protons of the C₆H₄ rings, while the most downfield shift was observed for the resonance corresponding to the iminic proton H₇.

![Figure 41. ¹H NMR spectra of compound 23 obtained by direct synthesis (up) and by metatethic pathway (down).](image)
From the NMR spectra shown in Figure 41 we can undoubtedly conclude that the product of the two reactions is identical. Also it seems that the direct synthesis yields a product with higher purity probably due to better control over the stoechiometry of the reaction.

3.4.3. Group 12 metal selenolates

3.4.3.1. Preparation

Zinc(II)- and cadmium(II) selenolates 25-30 have been prepared by metathesis reactions between anhydrous MCl₂ and two equivalents of the corresponding alkali metal selenolates (Scheme 33).

![Scheme 33.](image)

Lithium selenolates have been used to prepare compounds 25, 26 and 28 while sodium selenolate 20 was used to prepare zinc complex 27.

![Scheme 34.](image)
The zinc selenolates 29 and 30 have been prepared starting from the corresponding potassium selenolates which have been synthesized according to the procedure described in chapter 3.4.1.1. The resulting greenish-yellow solids are moderately air-sensitive and they decompose to the corresponding diselenides in few hours.

3.4.3.2. NMR spectroscopy

Figure 43 shows the $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra recorded at room temperature for zinc selenolate 25. As a result of the strong N→Zn intramolecular coordination in solution the two protons of the methylene group become non equivalent giving rise to an AB spin system consisting of two doublet resonances at $\delta$ 3.14 and 4.07 ppm.

![NMR spectra of compound 25](image)

Figure 43. $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra of compound 25

Also the two methyl groups bonded to nitrogen give rise to two singlet resonances at $\delta$ 1.65 and 2.54 ppm. The non equivalence of the methyl groups could also be observed in the $^{13}$C
NMR spectrum, where carbon resonances corresponding to C$_{8a}$ and C$_{8b}$ were observed at $\delta$ 45.91 and 49.54 ppm. Assignments of resonances in the $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra of compound 25 were made with the aid of COSY, HSQC, HMBC correlation experiments.

$^1$H NMR spectrum recorded at room temperature [Figure 44 (up)] for cadmium selenolate 26 displays a set of broad resonances for the protons of the methylene and methyl groups at $\delta$ 3.57 and 1.99 ppm respectively. Variable temperature NMR experiments were carried out for this compound to estimate the coalescence temperature and to calculate the free enthalpy $\Delta G^\ddagger_\text{c}$ for the corresponding dynamic processes. The coalescence for both type of protons was achieved at -5 °C and $\Delta G^\ddagger_\text{c} = 54.5$ kJ mol$^{-1}$ was calculated with the Eyring equation.

![NMR Spectra](image)

Figure 44. $^1$H NMR spectra of compound 26 at RT (up) and -60 °C (down)

The low temperature $^1$H NMR spectrum of compound 26 has a very similar pattern to the one observed for the zinc analogue 25 at room temperature. The singlet resonances at $\delta$ 3.60 and 2.30 ppm are due to the resulting diselenide 2 from the hydrolysis of selenolate 26 while carrying out the VT NMR experiments.

In the $^1$H NMR spectra recorded at room temperature for compounds 27 and 28 broad resonances can be observed in both cases for all aliphatic protons, thus suggesting weak intramolecular N→M [$\text{M} = \text{Zn}(27)$, Cd(28)] interactions in solution.

For cadmium compound 26 the $^{113}$Cd NMR was recorded and displayed, as expected, only one singlet resonance as expected at $\delta$ -196.2 ppm.
The room-temperature $^1$H NMR spectrum of compound 29 (Figure 45) displays an AB spin system in the aliphatic region for the methylenic proton of the benzyl moiety attached to nitrogen. In the aromatic region the highest upfield shift was observed for the ortho protons ($H_{10}$) of the same benzyl group while the $H_6$ protons were found to be the most deshielded aromatic protons.

![Figure 45. $^1$H NMR spectrum of compound 29](image)

The characteristic iminic proton gives rise to a singlet resonance at δ 7.99 ppm shifted significantly upfield when compared to the related diselenide 11 (δ 8.67 ppm). Variable temperature NMR experiments were carried out in order to find the coalescence temperature for the methylenic protons but raising the temperature up to 50 °C was not enough to reach coalescence as protons $H_{8a}$ and $H_{8b}$ were still non-equivalent at this temperature.

The $^1$H NMR spectrum recorded at room temperature for compound 30 was showing evidence of a dynamic process taking place in solution, thus making difficult the interpretation of the spectrum. Variable temperature NMR experiments were carried out for this compound. $^1$H NMR spectra were recorded from -40 °C to +50 °C with 5° increments to find the coalescence temperature. Also $^{13}$C, $^{77}$Se, COSY, HSQC and HMBC spectra were recorded at -40° C, RT and +50° C. The $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectra recorded at -40 °C for compound 30 are given in Figure 46. Assignments of chemical shifts in all cases were made with the aid of correlation spectra.
Although the two selenolato ligands bonded to zinc are equivalent the lack of symmetry induced by the presence of intramolecular coordination leads to the non equivalence of the two halves of the 2,6-iPr₂C₆H₃ moiety. At 50 °C a fast dynamic process takes place in solution can be observed in both ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra as all iso-propyl groups become equivalent (Figure 47).
3.4.3.5. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies

Single crystals of the complexes 25 and 26 suitable for X-ray diffraction studies were obtained from a CH$_2$Cl$_2$/n-hexane mixture (1/5, v/v). Relevant interatomic distances and angles are listed in Table 18, while the ORTEP-like diagrams are depicted in Figures 50 and 51, respectively. For the cadmium derivative 26 two independent molecules are present in the unit cell.

In both compound 25 and 26 the organoselenolato groups behave as monometallic biconnective moieties, being attached to the metal centre covalently by selenium [Zn1–Se1
2.390(2) in 25; Cd1-Se1 2.534(1) / Cd1-Se2 2.546(1) Å in 26a and Cd2-Se3 2.519(1) / Cd2-Se4 2.517(1) Å in 26b] and secondary by the nitrogen atoms of the pendant arms.

The intramolecular N→Zn coordination induces planar chirality. Compound 25 crystallizes in the chiral space group P2(1)2(1)2(1) (orthorhombic) and therefore the investigated crystal contains only the (R\textsubscript{Zn}(Se1),R\textsubscript{Zn}(Se1')) isomer. In 25 around the metal center two bidentate N,Se donor ligands have the right-handed (Δ or P) helicity along the C2-axis passing through the centre of the Se1⋯Se1’ edge, Zn and the centre of the N1⋯N1’ edge.

The molecules of this cadmium complex are similar to those of the Zn analogue 25 with respect to the tetrahedral environment of the metal centre. Due to the planar chirality induced by the intramolecular N→Cd coordination the compound crystallizes as a 1:1 mixture of (R\textsubscript{Cd1}(Se1),R\textsubscript{Cd1}(Se2)) / (S\textsubscript{Cd1}(Se1),S\textsubscript{Cd1}(Se2))-26a and (R\textsubscript{Cd2}(Se3),R\textsubscript{Cd2}(Se4)) / (S\textsubscript{Cd2}(Se3),S\textsubscript{Cd2}(Se4))-26b isomers.

The main difference in the molecular structure of the two derivatives consists in the orientation of the aromatic rings in the molecular unit with respect to the best plane described by the nitrogen and the methylene carbon atoms. In the zinc(II) complex 25 the two C\textsubscript{6}H\textsubscript{4} rings are placed on the same side of the N\textsubscript{2}C\textsubscript{2} plane as are the selenium and the metal atoms, so that any intramolecular C-H\textsubscript{methyl}⋯π (Ph\textsubscript{centroid}) contact is prevented [Figure 53 (left)]. By contrast, in the cadmium(II) complex 26 the aromatic rings are placed on the opposite side of the N\textsubscript{2}C\textsubscript{2} plane

[Figure 51. ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for 26a (left) and 26b (right) (hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity)]

[Figure 52. Right-handed (Δ or P) configuration of 25 viewed along the molecular C2 axis (left). For comparison a similar zinc complex with two N,O bidentate Schiff-base ligands with left-handed (Λ or M) configuration is shown (right). Only the six-membered chelate rings are shown for clarity.]

The main difference in the molecular structure of the two derivatives consists in the orientation of the aromatic rings in the molecular unit with respect to the best plane described by the nitrogen and the methylene carbon atoms. In the zinc(II) complex 25 the two C\textsubscript{6}H\textsubscript{4} rings are placed on the same side of the N\textsubscript{2}C\textsubscript{2} plane as are the selenium and the metal atoms, so that any intramolecular C-H\textsubscript{methyl}⋯π (Ph\textsubscript{centroid}) contact is prevented [Figure 53 (left)]. By contrast, in the cadmium(II) complex 26 the aromatic rings are placed on the opposite side of the N\textsubscript{2}C\textsubscript{2} plane
with respect to the selenium and the metal atoms [Figure 53 (right)]. This brings the aromatic rings closer to the methyl groups attached to nitrogen and weak C-H\textsubscript{methyl}⋯π (Ph\textsubscript{centroid}) are established [C9-H9B⋯Ph\textsubscript{centroid}(C10-C15) 2.85 Å and C18-H18C⋯Ph\textsubscript{centroid}(C1-C6) 3.03 Å for 26a; C26-H26A⋯Ph\textsubscript{centroid}(C28-C33) 2.87 Å and C35-H35B⋯Ph\textsubscript{centroid}(C19-C24) 3.01 Å for 26b].

**Figure 53.** Molecular structures of 25(left) and 26(right)

Single crystals of the complexes 29 and 30 suitable for X-ray diffraction studies were obtained from a CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2}/n-hexane mixture (1/5, v/v) in inert atmosphere. Relevant interatomic distances and angles are listed in Table 19, while the ORTEP-like diagrams are depicted in Figures 56 and 57, respectively.

**Figure 56.** ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for 29 (hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity) [symmetry equivalent atoms are given by “prime”]

**Figure 57.** ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for 30 (hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity)
In both compound 29 and 30 the organoselenolato groups behave as monometallic biconnective moieties, being attached to the metal centre covalently by selenium [Zn1–Se1 2.3563(7) in 29; Zn1-Se1 2.352(1) / Zn1-Se2 2.366(1) Å in 30] and secondary by the nitrogen of the pendant arms.

Due to the planar chirality induced by the intramolecular N→Zn coordination compound 29 crystallizes as a 1:1 mixture of \((R_{Zn1(Se1)} R_{Zn1(Se1')}) / (S_{Zn1(Se1)} S_{Zn1(Se1')})\) isomers.

In the molecule of 30 the nitrogen atom N1 is coplanar with C1, C2, C7 and Se1 of the best C3Se plane in the Zn1Se1C3N1 chelate ring as a result of the delocalization of the carbon-nitrogen double bond over the N1-C7-C2-C1 fragment, consistent with the stretching vibration observed in the IR spectrum of 30 for the double bond of the imino group.

3.5. Serendipitous coupling products

3.5.3. Preparation

In our attempts to obtain the zinc selenolates 29 and 30 by reacting the corresponding sodium selenolates (obtained in situ by reducing the diorgano diselenides 11 and 12 with a sodium mirror) with ZnCl2, we serendipitously obtained the coupling products 31 and 32 (Scheme 35).

![Scheme 35](image)

Trying to explain the formation of the unexpected products we found that several research groups have reported that reduction of transition metal complexes supported by Schiff-base ligands with elemental sodium yielded products with new formed C-C bonds formed.139-145 Recently a mechanism was reported for a samarium complex with a Schiff-base ligand.146

In our case experimental observations lead us to believe that impurities in the THF such as peroxides might play a role in the mechanism of the reaction.
3.5.4. NMR spectroscopy

$^1$H (Figure 60) and $^{13}$C NMR spectra were recorded for compound 32. The presence of a doublet resonance in the aliphatic region uncorrelated to a carbon atom in the HSQC spectrum was evidence of the reduction of the imino group to amino group and consequent presence of resonance corresponding to a $-NH-$ proton in the $^1$H NMR spectrum of this compound at $\delta$ 4.14 ppm. The neighboring -CH- group gives rise to a doublet resonance $\delta$ 4.99 ppm. Since no resonance was observed in the $^{77}$Se NMR spectrum it was supposed that compound 32 did not contain selenium.

![Figure 60. $^1$H NMR spectrum of compound 32](image)

3.5.4. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies

Single crystals of compound 32 suitable for X-Ray diffraction were obtained by slow evaporation of an acetonitrile solution. The ORTEP-like diagram is depicted in Figure 63.

![Figure 63. ORTEP-like representation at 30% probability and atom numbering scheme for 32 (hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity)](image)
5. Conclusions

Our objectives were to obtain new hypervalent diorgano diselenium(I) compounds and organoselenium halides and to use these as starting materials for the preparation of new Group 4 and Group 12 metal selenolates.

Six new diorgano diselenium(I) compounds were obtained and investigated by IR, multinuclear and 2D NMR spectroscopy, and for 3 of them the crystal and molecular structure was determined by single-crystal X-ray diffraction. A general, efficient synthetic route was elaborated to obtain diselenides supported by Schiff base ligands. Room-temperature $^1$H NMR experiments reveal no intramolecular N→Se coordination in solution. The equivalence of the diastereotopic protons on the NMR timescale can also be the result of fast nitrogen inversion or fast conformational exchange of the five-membered chelate rings that would be formed by intramolecular coordination. Single-crystal X-ray diffraction studies revealed a T-shaped (C,N)SeSe core due to a strong intramolecular N→Se interaction trans to the second Se atom and therefore the compounds can be described as hypervalent 10-Se-3 species. In the case of the amino derivatives the intramolecular N→Se interactions induce planar chirality [with the C(1)–C(6) aromatic ring and the N(1) atom as chiral plane and pilot atom, respectively]. The crystals of diselenides 5 and 7 contain 1:1 mixtures of R and S isomers.

A series of organoselenium halides was obtained and investigated by multinuclear and 2D NMR spectroscopy, and for 2 of them as well as for one adduct with HCl the crystal and molecular structure was determined by single-crystal X-ray diffraction. $^1$H NMR experiments reveal a complex pattern for the methylene protons of the ethyl groups for all members of the series. In the case of the chloride and of the bromide simulations were performed and a theoretical interpretation was proposed for the complex multiplets observed. Single crystal X-ray diffraction studies revealed a T-shaped (C,N)SeX core due to a strong intramolecular N→Se interaction trans to the halogen atom and therefore the compounds can be described as hypervalent 10-Se-3 species. Secondary intermolecular halogen-selenium interactions were not established. In the case of the adduct 15·HCl although the intramolecular coordination was absent, the T-shaped geometry was achieved by an additional Se-Cl bond. For a better understanding of the electronic structure of the organoselenium(II) halides and on the role played by the nature of the halogen species on the formation of the three-body system N→Se–X (X = halogen), density functional theory (DFT) calculations were performed and the data obtained were compared with the structural data obtained by X-ray diffraction.

Three new sodium selenolates, one potassium selenolate and one trimethylsilyl derivative were obtained and characterized by $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR spectroscopy. These are very useful reagents for metathesis reactions with different metal chlorides to obtain corresponding metal selenolates. Also it was demonstrated that reduction of a diselenide with potassium tri-sec-
butyl hydroborate (K-Selectride) yields the corresponding potassium selenolates in contrast with the analogous reaction of a diselenide with sodium borohydride which yields a complex anion incorporating the boron of the sodium borohydride.

Two new zirconocene selenolates were obtained using two different synthetic pathways in each case. The compounds were investigated by $^1$H NMR. Further investigations were prevented by the extremely high sensitivity of the compounds.

Four new zinc(II) selenolates and two new cadmium(II) selenolates were obtained and investigated by IR, multinuclear and 2D NMR spectroscopy at different temperatures, mass spectrometry and for 4 of them the crystal and molecular structure was determined by single-crystal X-ray diffraction. Zinc selenolates 29 and 30 are the first examples of Schiff-base complexes of zinc with selenium in the position of ligating atom. VT NMR experiments were carried out for cadmium selenolate 26 and zinc selenolate 30 to estimate the coalescence temperature and to calculate the free enthalpy $\Delta G^\ddagger_{c}$ for the corresponding dynamic processes. X-Ray diffraction studies reveal that crystals of compound 25 contain only one of the enantiomers of the helically chiral compound. This is the second example of a helically chiral tetrahedral zinc complex with bidentate selenolato ligands. In the case of compound 30 the delocalization of the carbon-nitrogen double bond over the N1-C7-C2-C1 fragment is obviously due to its planarity, consistent with the stretching vibration observed in the IR spectrum of 30 for the double bond of the imino group.

Two new organic coupling products were obtained in attempts to prepare zinc selenolates and were investigated by multinuclear and 2D NMR spectroscopy, mass spectrometry and for one of them the crystal and molecular structure was determined by single-crystal X-ray diffraction. Although similar carbon-carbon bond formation was observed in several cases when reducing metal complexes with metallic sodium, the mechanisms of the reactions are not yet well established.

In most cases supramolecular architectures were found in the solid state based on intermolecular C-H⋯π (Ph$_{centroid}$) or hydrogen-halogen interactions resulting in mono-, bi-, and tridimensional polymers in the crystal.
References:


