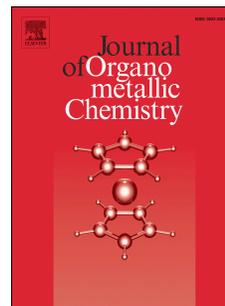


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## Synthesis of 1,4,5-trisubstituted triazoles by [3+2] cycloaddition of a ruthenium azido complex with ynoate esters

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### ABSTRACT

The [3+2] cycloaddition reactions of a series of ynoate esters with a ruthenium azido complex [Ru]-N<sub>3</sub> (**1**, [Ru] = ( $\eta^5$ -C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)(dppe)Ru, dppe = Ph<sub>2</sub>PCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>PPh<sub>2</sub>) were investigated. The reaction products, metal-bound heterocyclic complexes such as the triazolato complexes [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)<sub>2</sub> (**2**), [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)(CF<sub>3</sub>) (**3**), [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Me)(Ph) (**4**) and [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)(CH<sub>3</sub>) (**5**) were produced from diethyl acetylene dicarboxylate, ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoro-2-butynoate, methyl phenylpropiolate and ethyl 2-butynoate, respectively. The complexes were all structurally characterized as being N(2)-bound. The alkylation of **2** with organic halides resulted in the cleavage of the Ru-N bond and the formation of a series of 1-alkylated-4,5-bis(ethoxycarbonyl)-1,2,3-triazoles N<sub>3</sub>(CH<sub>2</sub>R)C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)<sub>2</sub> (**6a**, R = H; **6b**, R = C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub>; **6c**, R = Ph; **6d**, R = 4-CH<sub>2</sub>Br-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>; **6e**, R = 4-CN-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>). The high regioselective alkylation of **4** with organic halides gave a 1-alkylated-4-phenyl-5-methoxycarbonyl-1,2,3-triazoles N<sub>3</sub>(CH<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub>)C<sub>2</sub>(Ph)(CO<sub>2</sub>Me) (**N<sup>3</sup>-7a**). The structures of complexes **2**, **3**, **4**, **5** and **N<sup>3</sup>-7a** were confirmed by single-crystal X-ray diffraction analysis.

*Keywords:* [3+2] cycloaddition; ruthenium azide; ruthenium triazolate; internal alkynes; ynoate esters; 1,4,5-trisubstituted 1,2,3-triazole

### 1. Introduction

The 1,2,3-triazole structure, a nitrogen-containing heterocycle found in biomolecules [1-3], has found widespread applications in agricultural [4-7], medicinal [8-14] and material [15-18] chemistry during the past decades. In recent years, the chemistry of triazole and derivatives thereof have been heavily studied, given the pharmacological importance of the heterocyclic nucleus and because of their diverse biological activities [19,20]. Such 1,2,3-triazole derivatives are typically prepared by the

Huisgen 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition of azides and alkynes [21]. Metal catalyzed cycloaddition reactions [22-26] have also been employed in recent years and based on the so called “click chemistry” concept [27], a huge number of reports dealing with copper-catalyzed azide-alkyne cycloaddition (CuAAC) [28] and ruthenium-catalyzed azide-terminal-alkyne cycloaddition (RuAAC) [29] reactions to give 1,4-disubstituted and 1,5-disubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles have appeared. On the contrary, the application of a [3+2] cycloaddition strategy for the synthesis of fully substituted 1,4,5-trisubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles has not been found to be generally applicable, since the final products are frequently mixtures of regioisomers [30]. Internal alkynes are not ideal starting products, because they do not easily react with azides to give fully substituted triazoles due to their weak activity and difficulties associated with controlling the regiochemistry of the reactions. As a result, only few examples of the regiospecific synthesis of fully substituted triazoles by CuACC have been reported [31].

The [3+2] cycloaddition reaction between a metal-coordinated azide group and an alkyne was first reported by Fehlhhammer’s group for the reaction of  $(\text{Ph}_3\text{P})_2\text{Pd}(\text{N}_3)_2$  with dimethylacetylene dicarboxylate (DMAD) [32i]. Reactions of azido metal complexes with alkynes has attracted the interest of various research groups for decades, and many metal azides have been shown to give 1,2,3-triazolato complexes [32]. In most cases, the activated alkynes used as dipolarophiles are limited to highly electron-poor alkynes such as dialkylacetylene dicarboxylate,  $\text{CF}_3\text{C}\equiv\text{CCF}_3$  and  $\text{HC}\equiv\text{CCN}$  [32]. The formation of an N-coordinate metal triazolato complex by the [3+2] cycloaddition of a metal-coordinated azide with a less electron-poor internal alkyne, such as  $\text{CH}_3\text{C}\equiv\text{CCO}_2\text{Et}$  and  $\text{PhC}\equiv\text{CCO}_2\text{Me}$ , is rare [32a]. In a previous study, we reported on the [3+2] cycloaddition of a ruthenium azido complex with excess amounts of alkenes and alkynes to form a variety of ruthenium triazolato complexes [33] and successfully developed a reaction cycle for the synthesis of organic triazoles [34]. Our continuing interest in ruthenium triazolato complexes involves the synthesis of functionalized organic 1,2,3-triazoles and the development of reaction cycles involve regiospecific alkylation and the subsequent Ru-N bond cleavage of various ruthenium triazolato complexes. Herein we report on our recent findings regarding the reactivity of ruthenium azide toward a series of ynoate esters,  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated carboxylic esters with the general formula  $\text{R}^1\text{C}\equiv\text{C}-\text{CO}_2\text{R}^2$  ( $\text{R}^2 \neq \text{H}$ ) in which the ester C=O function is conjugated to a C $\equiv$ C triple bond located at the  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  position. We now report on the results of detailed synthetic and structural investigations into this reaction. A preliminary account of the steric and electronic effects for the structures and the reactivity of the thus formed triazolato complexes with organic halides are reported.

## 2. Experimental section

### 2.1. General procedures

All solvents and reagents were of reagent grade and were used without further purification. Elemental analyses were performed on a Perkin-Elmer 2400 CHN elemental analyzer. HR & LR-FAB mass spectra were conducted on a JMS-700 double focusing mass spectrometer (JEOL, Tokyo, Japan) with a resolution of 8000(3000) (5% valley definition). IR spectra were measured on a Perkin-Elmer Paragon 1000 FT-IR spectrometer in the range of 4000-400  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  using KBr pellets. NMR spectra were recorded on Bruker AV3-400 and AVA-300 NMR spectrometers at room temperature and are reported in units of  $\delta$  with residual protons in the solvents as an initial standard ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ,  $\delta$  7.24;  $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$ ,  $\delta$  3.35). Complexes  $[\text{Ru}]\text{-N}_3$  (**1**,  $[\text{Ru}] = (\eta^5\text{-C}_5\text{H}_5)(\text{dppe})\text{Ru}$ ,  $\text{dppe} = \text{Ph}_2\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{PPh}_2$ ) [33], were prepared following methods reported in the literature. Elemental analyses were carried out at the Institute of Chemistry, Academia Sinica. X-ray diffraction studies were carried out at the Instrumentation Center located at the National Taiwan University.

### 2.2. Synthesis of $\text{Cp}(\text{dppe})\text{RuN}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$ (**2**)

To a Schlenk flask charged with **1** (300.0 mg, 0.495 mmol), diethyl acetylenedicarboxylate (252 mg, 237  $\mu\text{L}$ , 1.485 mmol) and  $\text{CHCl}_3$  (30 mL) were added. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36 h and the volume of solvent was reduced to 2 mL under a rotary evaporator. To the residue, 20 mL of *n*-pentane was added to give a yellow precipitate. After isolation the precipitate on a filter, it was washed with 2 $\times$ 5 mL of *n*-pentane and dried under a vacuum to give **2** (357.3 mg, 0.46 mmol, 93 % yield). Spectroscopic data for **2** are as follows: IR (KBr,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ):  $\nu(\text{C}=\text{O})$  1708 (vs),  $\nu(\text{N}=\text{N})$  1431 (s),  $\nu(\text{C}-\text{O})$  1285 (m), 1077 (s),  $\nu(\text{COO}^-)$  693 (s), 528 (s).  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.46-7.13 (m, 20H, Ph), 4.65 (Cp), 4.19 (q, 4H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.20$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 3.25, 2.52 (2m,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ), 1.19 (t, 6H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.20$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ).  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  87.2.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  161.8 ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), 142.2 ( $\text{CCO}_2$ ), 142.4-127.0 (Ph), 81.9 (Cp), 59.8 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 28.5 (t,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ,  $J_{\text{C-P}} = 23.1$  Hz), 14.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ).  $c$  777.1 ( $\text{M}^+$ ), 565.1 ( $\text{M}^+$ -triazolato ring). Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{39}\text{H}_{39}\text{N}_3\text{O}_4\text{P}_2\text{Ru}$ : C, 60.30; H, 5.06; N, 5.41 Found: C, 60.32; H, 5.07; N, 5.39.

### 2.3. Synthesis of $\text{Cp}(\text{dppe})\text{RuN}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})(\text{CF}_3)$ (**3**)

To a Schlenk flask charged with **1** (198 mg, 0.327 mmol), ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoro-2-butynoate (233.5  $\mu\text{L}$ , 271 mg, 1.634 mmol) and  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  (20 mL) were

added. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 24 h and the volume of solvent was then reduced to 2 mL under a rotary evaporator. To the residue, 20 mL of *n*-pentane was added to give a yellow precipitate. After isolating the precipitate on a filter, it was washed with 2×5 mL of *n*-pentane and dried under a vacuum to give **3** (232.1 mg, 0.301 mmol, 92 % yield). Spectroscopic data for **3** are as follows: IR (KBr,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ):  $\nu(\text{C}=\text{O})$  1720 (vs),  $\nu(\text{N}=\text{N})$  1435 (s),  $\nu(\text{C}-\text{O})$  1310 (m), 1184 (vs), 1127 (vs), 1160 (vs), 1050 (vs),  $\nu(\text{COO}^-)$  695 (s), 528 (s).  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ): 7.68-7.13 (m, 20H, Ph), 4.66 (Cp), 4.15 (q, 4H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.20$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 3.20, 2.55 (2m,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ), 1.22 (t, 6H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.20$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ).  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ): 87.0.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ): 160.5 ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), 137.6 (q,  $J_{\text{CCF}} = 37.2$  Hz,  $\text{CCF}_3$ ), 135.4 ( $\text{CCO}_2$ ), 121.0 (q,  $J_{\text{CF}} = 267.6$  Hz,  $\text{CF}_3$ ), 142.2-127.7 (Ph), 81.9 (Cp), 59.9 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 28.5 (t,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ,  $J_{\text{C-P}} = 22.6$  Hz), 14.0 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ). MS ( $m/z$ ,  $\text{Ru}^{102}$ ): 773.2 ( $\text{M}^+$ ), 565.1 ( $\text{M}^+$ -triazolato ring). Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{37}\text{H}_{34}\text{F}_3\text{N}_3\text{O}_2\text{P}_2\text{Ru}$ : C, 57.51; H, 4.44; N, 5.44 Found: C, 57.66; H, 4.43; N, 5.40.

#### 2.4. Synthesis of *N*(2)-bound $\text{Cp}(\text{dppe})\text{RuN}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Me})(\text{Ph})$ (**4**)

To a Schlenk flask charged with **1** (524.1 mg, 0.865 mmol), methyl phenylpropiolate (834 mg, 780  $\mu\text{L}$ , 4.32 mmol) and benzene (10 mL) were added. The mixture was heated to reflux for 48 h and the volume of solvent was then reduced to 2 mL under a rotary evaporator. To the residue, 20 mL of *n*-hexane was added to give a yellow precipitate. After isolating the precipitate on a filter, it was washed with 2×3 mL of *n*-hexane and dried under a vacuum to give **4** (623.0 mg, 0.813 mmol, 94 % yield). Spectroscopic data for **4** are as follows: IR (KBr,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ): 2917 (m),  $\nu(\text{C}=\text{O})$  1700 (vs), 1536 (m), 1477 (s),  $\nu(\text{N}=\text{N})$  1433 (s), 1397 (m),  $\nu(\text{C}-\text{O})$  1312 (m), 1295 (m), 1184 (m), 1098 (vs),  $\nu(\text{COO}^-)$  705 (vs), 526 (s).  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.56-6.65 (m, 25H, Ph), 4.62 (Cp), 3.69 (s, 3H,  $\text{CH}_3$ ), 3.18, 2.60 (2m,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ).  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  86.9.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  162.8 ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), 149.1 ( $\text{CCO}_2$ ), 142.9-119.5 (Ph,  $\text{N}_3\text{CPh}$ ), 82.0 (Cp), 51.0 ( $\text{OCH}_3$ ), 28.9 (t,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ,  $J_{\text{C-P}} = 22.6$  Hz). MS ( $m/z$ ,  $\text{Ru}^{102}$ ): 767.1 ( $\text{M}^+$ ), 565.1 ( $\text{M}^+$ -triazolato ring). Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{41}\text{H}_{37}\text{N}_3\text{O}_2\text{P}_2\text{Ru}$ : C, 64.22; H, 4.86; N, 5.48 Found: C, 64.32; H, 4.88; N, 5.45.

#### 2.5. Synthesis of $\text{Cp}(\text{dppe})\text{RuN}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})(\text{CH}_3)$ (**5**)

To a Schlenk flask charged with **1** (127.2 mg, 0.177 mmol), ethyl 2-butynoate (198.6 mg, 211  $\mu\text{L}$ , 98% purity, 1.77 mmol) and toluene (10 mL) were added. The mixture was heated under a 120°C silicone oil bath for 48 h and the volume of solvent was then reduced to 1 mL under a rotary evaporator. To the residue, 10 mL of *n*-pentane was added to give a yellow precipitate. After isolating the precipitate on a filter, it was

washed with 2×3 mL of *n*-pentane and dried under a vacuum to give the **5** (106.8 mg, 0.149 mmol, 84 % yield). Spectroscopic data for **5** are as follows: IR (KBr,  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ):  $\nu(\text{C}=\text{O})$  1700 (vs), 1529 (m),  $\nu(\text{N}=\text{N})$  1433 (s), 1384 (s),  $\nu(\text{C}-\text{O})$  1314 (m), 1273 (m), 1128 (m), 1071 (vs),  $\nu(\text{COO}^-)$  700 (vs), 527 (s).  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.46-7.11 (m, 20H, Ph), 4.58 (Cp), 4.06 (q, 2H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 3.24, 2.52 (2m,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ), 1.20 (t, 3H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ).  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  87.6.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  162.7 ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), 146.2 ( $\text{CCO}_2$ ), 143.1-127.4 (Ph,  $\text{N}_3\text{CCH}_3$ ), 81.7 (Cp), 58.8 ( $\text{OCH}_3$ ), 28.7 (t,  $\text{PCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{P}$ ,  $J_{\text{C-P}} = 22.6$  Hz). MS ( $m/z$ ,  $\text{Ru}^{102}$ ): 719.1 ( $\text{M}^+$ ), 565.1 ( $\text{M}^+$ -triazolato ring). Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{37}\text{H}_{37}\text{N}_3\text{O}_2\text{P}_2\text{Ru}$ : C, 61.83; H, 5.19; N, 5.85 Found: C, 61.95; H, 5.20; N, 5.82.

## 2.6. Synthesis of $\text{N}_3(\text{CH}_3)\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$ (**6a**) and other organic triazoles

To a Schlenk flask charged with **2** (100.1 mg, 0.129 mmol) and  $\text{CH}_3\text{I}$  (82  $\mu\text{L}$ , 182.9 mg, 1.288 mmol) was added  $\text{CHCl}_3$  (20 mL). The resulting solution was warmed under a 50 °C silicone oil bath for 24 h and the solvent and the excess  $\text{CH}_3\text{I}$  were then removed by vacuum evaporation. To the residue was added 10 mL of cold *n*-pentane. After filtration, the orange precipitate was washed with 2×10 mL of *n*-pentane and dried under a vacuum to give  $[\text{Ru}]\text{-I}$  (81.9 mg, 0.118 mmol, 92 % yield). The filtrate was dried and extracted with 2×5 mL of cold *n*-pentane. The extract was filtered and the filtrate was dried under a vacuum to give a colorless liquid, which is the organic triazole  $\text{N}_3(\text{CH}_3)\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$  (**6a**, 17.6 mg, 0.077 mmol, 60 %). Spectroscopic data for **6a** are as follows:  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta$  4.24, 4.10 (2q, 4H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 3.44 (s, 3H,  $\text{NCH}_3$ ), 1.12, 1.07 (2t, 6H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR ( $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta$  160.9, 158.5 ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), 141.6, 129.7 ( $\text{CCO}_2$ ), 62.2, 61.5 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 22.7 ( $\text{NCH}_3$ ), 14.2, 13.8 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ). MS ( $m/z$ ): 228.1 ( $\text{M}^+ + 1$ ). HRMS ( $m/z$ ) calcd for  $\text{C}_9\text{H}_{13}\text{N}_3\text{O}_4$  [ $\text{M} + \text{H}$ ] $^+$  228.0981, found 228.0983. Complexes  $\text{N}_3(\text{CH}_2\text{Ph})\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$  (**6b**),  $\text{N}_3(\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$  (**6c**),  $\text{N}_3[\text{CH}_2(4\text{-CN-C}_6\text{H}_4)]\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$  (**6d**) and  $\text{N}_3[\text{CH}_2(4\text{-CH}_2\text{Br-C}_6\text{H}_4)]\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$  (**6e**) were prepared with similar procedure as that of **6a** to give a mixture of the organic triazole and organic bromides. Spectroscopic data for **6b** (colorless liquid) are as follows:  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.31, 7.30, 7.27 (Ph), 5.08 (s, 2H,  $\text{NCH}_2$ ), 4.44 (q, 2H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 6.9$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 4.34 (q, 2H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 1.41 (t, 3H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ), 1.28 (t, 3H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 6.9$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  160.0, 158.4 ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), 140.4, 133.9 ( $\text{CCO}_2$ ), 129.8, 129.3, 128.8, 127.9 (Ph), 62.7, 61.8 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 53.7 ( $\text{NCH}_2$ ), 14.1, 13.7 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ). MS ( $m/z$ ): 306.1 ( $\text{M}^+ + 1$ ). Spectroscopic data for **6c** (colorless liquid) are as follows:  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.86, 7.40, 7.25, 7.13 (m, Ph), 5.88 (s, 2H,  $\text{NCH}_2$ ), 4.46 (q, 2H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 4.42 (q, 2H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 1.41 (t, 3H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ), 1.40 (t, 3H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  160.5, 158.3 ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), 147.2, 143.0, 140.4, 139.9, 133.9, 129.9, 107.6 ( $\text{CCO}_2$  and Ph), 63.2, 62.0 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 41.1 ( $\text{NCH}_2$ ), 14.1,

13.8 (CH<sub>3</sub>). MS (*m/z*): 394.1 (M<sup>+</sup>+1). Spectroscopic data for **6d** (white solid) are as follows: <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.87-7.08 (m, Ph), 5.84 (s, 2H, NCH<sub>2</sub>), 4.41 (q, 2H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.2 Hz, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 4.32 (q, 2H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.2 Hz, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 1.38 (t, 3H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.2 Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.28 (t, 3H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.2 Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 160.1, 158.2 (CO<sub>2</sub>), 142.8, 141.1, 139.1 (CN and CCO<sub>2</sub>), 134.0, 131.4, 128.9, 128.0 (Ph), 63.0, 62.1 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 53.1 (NCH<sub>2</sub>), 14.2, 13.8 (CH<sub>3</sub>). MS (*m/z*): 329.1 (M<sup>+</sup>+1). Spectroscopic data for **6e** (milk-white solid) are as follows: <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.86-7.07 (m, Ph), 5.76 (s, 2H, NCH<sub>2</sub>), 4.42 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>Br), 4.40 (q, 2H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.1 Hz, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 4.30 (q, 2H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.1 Hz, OCH<sub>2</sub>), 1.37 (t, 3H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.1 Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.27 (t, 3H, *J*<sub>H-H</sub> = 7.1 Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 160.0, 158.4 (CO<sub>2</sub>), 140.5, 138.4, 134.1, 133.9, 131.3, 128.9, 128.4, 127.9 (CCO<sub>2</sub> and Ph), 62.8, 61.8 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 53.3 (NCH<sub>2</sub>), 31.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>Br), 14.1, 13.7 (CH<sub>3</sub>). MS (*m/z*): 396.1 (M<sup>+</sup>+1). Spectroscopic data for N<sub>3</sub>(CH<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub>)C(CO<sub>2</sub>Me)C(Ph) (**N<sup>3</sup>-7a**) are as follows: <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.69-7.41 (m, 2H, Ph), 7.43-7.41 (m, 3H, Ph), 6.00 (s, 2H, NCH<sub>2</sub>), 3.87 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 159.6 (CO<sub>2</sub>), 150.4 (CCO<sub>2</sub>), 147.3, 143.8, 140.2, 133.9, 133.0, (5m, C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub>), 129.7, 129.35, 129.2, 128.1 (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 108.3 (t, C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub>), 52.6 (OCH<sub>3</sub>), 42.0 (NCH<sub>2</sub>). MS (*m/z*): 384.1 (M<sup>+</sup>+1). HRMS: calc. for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>10</sub>F<sub>5</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>2</sub>: *m/z* 383.0691, found 383.0693.

## 2.7. X-ray analysis

Single crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction study were grown as mentioned above. The chosen single crystal was glued to a glass fiber and mounted on a Bruker SMART APEX diffractometer equipped with graphite monochromatic Mo-*K*α radiation (λ = 0.71073 Å). Data collection was executed using the SMART program; cell refinement and data reduction were performed with the SAINT program [35]. The structure was determined by the SHELXTL/PC [36] program and refined by the full-matrix least-squares methods on *F*<sup>2</sup>. Hydrogen atoms were placed geometrically using the riding model with thermal parameters set to 1.2 times that for the atoms to which the hydrogen is attached and 1.5 times that for the methyl hydrogens. Crystal data of complex **2**, **3**, **4**, **5** and **N<sup>3</sup>-7a** are listed in Table 1.

CCDC 1891931, 1891932, 1891933, 1891934 and 1907581 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper.

**Table 1**

Crystal and intensity collection data for complexes **2**, **3**, **4**, **5** and **N<sup>3</sup>-7a**

|                   | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>N<sup>3</sup>-7a</b>  |
|-------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| Empirical formula | C <sub>39</sub> H <sub>39</sub> N <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub> P <sub>2</sub> Ru | C <sub>37</sub> H <sub>34</sub> F <sub>3</sub> N <sub>3</sub> O <sub>2</sub> P <sub>2</sub> Ru | C <sub>41</sub> H <sub>37</sub> N <sub>3</sub> O <sub>2</sub> P <sub>2</sub> Ru | C <sub>37</sub> H <sub>37</sub> N <sub>3</sub> O <sub>2</sub> P <sub>2</sub> Ru | C <sub>17</sub> H <sub>10</sub> F <sub>5</sub> N <sub>3</sub> O <sub>2</sub> |

|                                     |   |                              |                              |                              |                              |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Formula weight                      | 776.74                                    | 772.68                       | 766.74                       | 718.70                       | 383.28                       |
| T (K)                               | 150(2)                                    | 150(2)                       | 150(2)                       | 150(2)                       | 150(2)                       |
| Wavelength, Å                       | 0.71073                                   | 0.71073                      | 0.71073                      | 0.71073                      | 1.54178                      |
| Cryst syst                          | Monoclinic                                | Orthorhombic                 | Monoclinic                   | Monoclinic                   | Monoclinic                   |
| Space group                         | P2 <sub>1</sub> /c                        | Pnma                         | P2 <sub>1</sub> /c           | P2 <sub>1</sub> /n           | P2 <sub>1</sub> /n           |
| a, Å                                | 9.4876(2)                                 | 22.1330(7)                   | 11.6658(2)                   | 9.4817(5)                    | 14.5885(4)                   |
| b, Å                                | 21.7420(6)                                | 16.0430(5)                   | 19.1128(4)                   | 21.7681(10)                  | 7.4116(2)                    |
| c, Å                                | 16.7037(4)                                | 9.4444(3)                    | 16.8525(4)                   | 16.0285(8)                   | 28.8007(7)                   |
| β, deg                              | 97.6614(7)                                | 90                           | 109.9796(5)                  | 91.8215(12)                  | 93.4111(8)                   |
| V, Å <sup>3</sup>                   | 3414.87(14)                               | 3353.51(18)                  | 3531.39(13)                  | 3306.6(3)                    | 3108.53(14)                  |
| Z                                   | 4   | 4                            | 4                            | 4                            | 8                            |
| Density (calcd), Mg/m <sup>3</sup>  | 1.511                                     | 1.530                        | 1.442                        | 1.444                        | 1.638                        |
| Absorption coeff., mm <sup>-1</sup> | 0.600                                     | 0.618                        | 0.575                        | 0.609                        | 1.326                        |
| F(000)                              | 1600                                      | 1576                         | 1576                         | 1480                         | 1552                         |
| θ range, deg                        | 2.360 to 27.489                           | 2.236 to 27.481              | 2.489 to 29.998              | 2.262 to 27.443              | 3.319 to 74.996              |
| Reflections collected               | 23784                                     | 22759                        | 33805                        | 7494                         | 20912                        |
| Independent reflections             | 7831                                      | 3982                         | 10289                        | 7494                         | 6397                         |
| GOF <sup>a</sup> on F <sup>2</sup>  | 1.050                                     | 1.294                        | 1.057                        | 1.064                        | 1.052                        |
| R (I > 2σ(I))                       | <sup>b</sup> R1 = 0.0250,<br>wR2 = 0.0588 | R1 = 0.0887,<br>wR2 = 0.2036 | R1 = 0.0305,<br>wR2 = 0.0640 | R1 = 0.0482,<br>wR2 = 0.1160 | R1 = 0.0361,<br>wR2 = 0.0918 |
| R (all data)                        | R1 = 0.0302,<br>wR2 = 0.0626              | R1 = 0.0920,<br>wR2 = 0.2058 | R1 = 0.0378,<br>wR2 = 0.0673 | R1 = 0.0628,<br>wR2 = 0.1283 | R1 = 0.0417,<br>wR2 = 0.0988 |
| Peak, hole, e Å <sup>-3</sup>       | 0.367, -0.400                             | 1.840, -0.943                | 0.463, -0.646                | 1.480, -0.756                | 0.315, -0.278                |

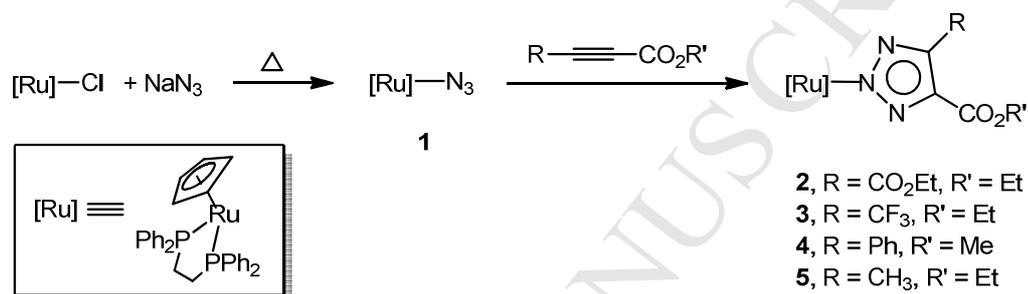
<sup>a</sup>GOF =  $[\sum[w(F_o^2 - F_c^2)^2]/(n-p)]^{1/2}$ ;  $n$  = number of reflections,  $p$  = number of parameters refined. <sup>b</sup>R1 =  $(\sum||F_o| - |F_c||)/\sum|F_o|$ , wR2 =  $[\sum[w(F_o^2 - F_c^2)^2]/\sum[wF_o^4]]^{1/2}$ .

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Preparation of triazoloto complexes 2-5

Treatment of **1** with a 5-fold excess of diethyl acetylene dicarboxylate in CHCl<sub>3</sub> at room temperature under an atmosphere of air for 36 hours afforded a [3+2] dipolar cycloaddition product, the N(2)-bound 4,5-bis(ethoxycarbonyl)-1,2,3-triazoloto complex [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)<sub>2</sub> (**2**), in 93 % isolated yield (Scheme 1). A molecular ion peak at  $m/z$  777.1 (M<sup>+</sup>) in the FAB mass spectrum of **2** was observed. The structure of **2** was clearly established as the N(2)-bound isomer based on its <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum, which showed a quartet signal centered at δ 4.19 (q, 2H,  $J_{H-H} = 7.2$  Hz) and a triplet signal centered at δ

1.19 (t, 3H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz), attributed to the two anisochronous ethoxycarbonyl protons of **2**. The  $^1\text{H}$  spectrum of an N(1)-bound isomer would show two sets of AX pattern resonances for its two asynchronous ethoxycarbonyl groups. It should be noted that the triazole and tetrazole anion could be coordinated to the metal through either its N(1) or N(2) nitrogen atom [37], which are essentially isoenergetic, as evidenced by molecular orbital calculations [38]. The evidence obtained to date indicates that either the two N(1)- and N(2)-bonded isomers are formed simultaneously or that the N(2)-bound isomer is the exclusive product [37, 38]. In our case, the time-elapsing  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR study of the formation of **2** did not provide any evidence for the formation of the N(1)-bound isomer during the reaction.



**Scheme 1.**

Treatment of **1** with a 5-fold excess of ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoro-2-butynoate in  $\text{CHCl}_3$  at room temperature for 24 hours afforded the N(2)-bound 4-ethoxycarbonyl-5-trifluoromethyl-1,2,3-triazolato complex  $[\text{Ru}]\text{N}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})(\text{CF}_3)$  (**3**), in 92 % isolated yield (Scheme 1). When the reaction was monitored by  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectroscopy, only one new singlet resonance at  $\delta$  87.0 was observed. In the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum, a quartet signal centered at  $\delta$  4.15 and a triplet signal centered at  $\delta$  1.22 attributed to the ethoxycarbonyl protons of **3** appeared. The FAB mass spectrum of **3** displayed a molecular ion peak at  $m/z$  773.2 ( $\text{M}^+$ ). Analogous [3+2] cycloadditions of methyl phenylpropiolate and ethyl 2-butynoate with **1** cleanly produced the triazolates  $[\text{Ru}]\text{N}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Me})(\text{Ph})$  (**4**)  $[\text{Ru}]\text{N}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})(\text{CH}_3)$  (**5**) and in 94 % and 84 % isolated yields, respectively. Both of the reactions did not proceed at room temperature. The preparation of  $[\text{Ru}]\text{N}_3\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Me})(\text{Ph})$  (**4**) was accomplished by treating **1** with a 5-fold excess of methyl phenylpropiolate in refluxing benzene (b.p. 80.1 °C) for 48 hours. The preparation of **5** was accomplished in a more vigorous condition. When **1** was treated with a 10-fold excess of ethyl 2-butynoate in refluxing toluene (b.p. 110.6 °C) for 12 hours, the resonance of **1** at  $\delta$  81.5 in the  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectrum became smaller and a new peak at  $\delta$  87.6, attributed to **5** appeared. The reaction was completed in 48 hours.

All four triazolato complexes **2**, **3**, **4** and **5** obtained by [3+2] cycloaddition with the internal alkynes exhibit an N(2)-coordination of the five-membered ring and

time-elapsd  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR studies of the formation of **2-5** did not provide any evidence for the formation of the N(1)-bound isomer during the reaction. In most cases, the activated alkynes used as dipolarophiles are limited to highly electron-poor alkynes. The formation of an N-coordinate metal triazoloto complex by the [3+2] cycloaddition of a metal-coordinated azide with a less electron-poor internal alkyne, such as  $\text{PhC}\equiv\text{CCO}_2\text{Me}$  and  $\text{CH}_3\text{C}\equiv\text{CCO}_2\text{Et}$ , is rare [32a]. To the best of our knowledge, compound **5** prepared using 2-butynoate is the first example of the preparation of an N-coordinated metal triazoloto complex.

In this study, the different reaction times and reaction temperatures indicate that the reactivity of dipolar [3+2] cycloaddition reactions is highly related to the nature of the alkyne being used and is highly temperature dependent. Diethyl acetylene dicarboxylate and ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoro-2-butynoate, internal alkynes with two strong electron-withdrawing groups, participated smoothly in a [3+2] cycloaddition with [Ru]- $\text{N}_3$  (**1**) at room temperature and the reaction was complete in 48 and 24 hours, respectively. Methyl phenylpropiolate and ethyl 2-butynoate, less electron-poor alkynes, failed to react with **1** at room temperature and more drastic, vigorous conditions were needed to complete the reaction. These results indicate that the ynoate ester with a  $\text{CF}_3$  substituent showed best reactivity, and the trend was  $\text{CF}_3 > \text{CO}_2\text{Et} > > \text{C}_6\text{H}_5 > \text{CH}_3$ , which is directly proportional to their electron-withdrawing ability.

The molecular structures of the triazoloto complexes **2-5** have been established by single crystal X-ray diffraction analysis. Diffraction-quality crystals were obtained by allowing *n*-hexane to diffuse into  $\text{CHCl}_3$  solutions of **2-5**. ORTEP drawings are shown in Figure 1-4, respectively. Crystallographic and refinement data for **2-5** are summarized in Table 1. Selected bond distances and angles are given in Table 2.

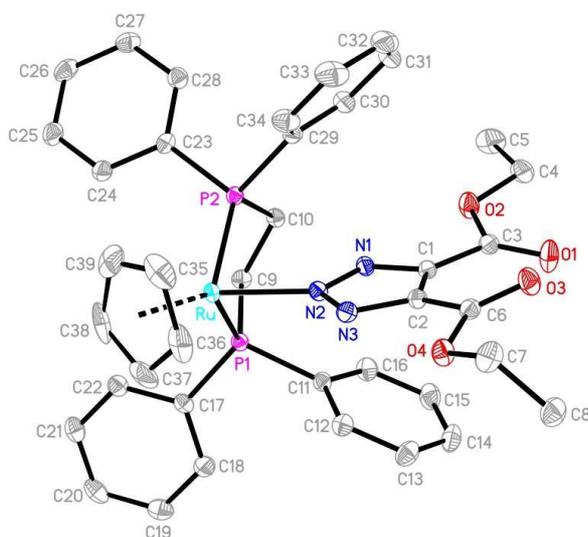
**Table 2**

Selected Bond Distances ( $\text{\AA}$ ) and Angles (deg) for **2, 3, 4** and **5**

|          | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>   | <b>5</b>   |
|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Ru–P1    | 2.2878(4)  | 2.2847(18) | 2.2808(4)  | 2.2790(11) |
| Ru–P2    | 2.2940(4)  | 2.2847(18) | 2.2712(4)  | 2.2823(12) |
| Ru–N2    | 2.0869(13) | 2.167(7)   | 2.0748(13) | 2.071(3)   |
| N1–N2    | 1.3316(19) | 1.299(12)  | 1.3446(19) | 1.347(4)   |
| N2–N3    | 1.3397(19) | 1.263(12)  | 1.3276(19) | 1.322(4)   |
| N3–C2    | 1.351(2)   | 1.366(12)  | 1.362(2)   | 1.349(5)   |
| C1–C2    | 1.396(2)   | 1.394(15)  | 1.401(2)   | 1.395(6)   |
| N1–C1    | 1.341(2)   | 1.334(12)  | 1.343(2)   | 1.344(5)   |
| P1–Ru–P2 | 83.386(15) | 84.29(9)   | 85.201(16) | 84.14(4)   |

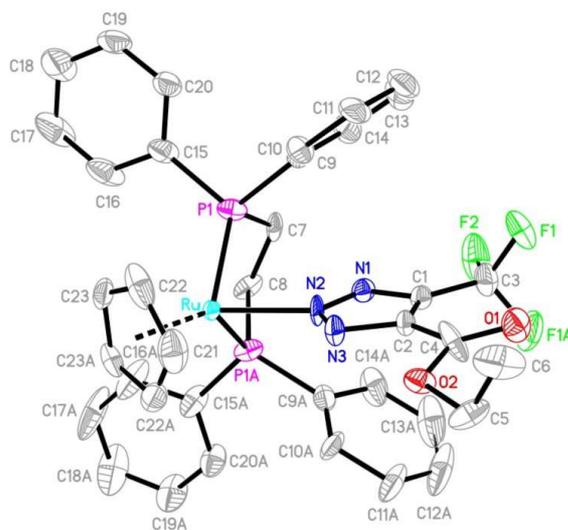
|          |            |          |            |          |
|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| N2–Ru–P1 | 89.50(4)   | 88.1(2)  | 87.90(4)   | 90.54(9) |
| N2–Ru–P2 | 85.69(4)   | 88.1(2)  | 87.57(4)   | 86.27(9) |
| N1–N2–Ru | 122.18(10) | 119.6(6) | 128.31(10) | 124.1(2) |
| N3–N2–Ru | 124.91(11) | 121.7(8) | 124.92(10) | 122.9(2) |
| N2–N3–C2 | 105.10(13) | 103.3(8) | 104.86(13) | 105.4(3) |
| N1–N2–N3 | 112.83(13) | 119.1(8) | 113.13(23) | 112.9(3) |
| N2–N1–C1 | 106.18(13) | 102.4(8) | 106.17(13) | 105.8(3) |
| N1–C1–C2 | 107.66(14) | 108.7(9) | 107.19(14) | 107.3(3) |
| N3–C2–C1 | 108.22(14) | 106.4(9) | 108.55(14) | 108.6(3) |

The triazolate ligands in **2-5** are all bonded to the Ru *via* their N(2) atom. For **2**, the coordination with ruthenium is a distorted piano-stool geometry, with three facial sites being occupied by the C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub> ligand (Ru–C = 2.2878(4)-2.2034(18) Å ; average 2.2088 Å); the other three positions are occupied by two phosphine ligands (Ru–P1 = 2.2878(4) Å; Ru–P2 = 2.2940(4) Å) and the triazolate group (Ru–N2 = 2.0869(13) Å), which are comparable to those in other ruthenium triazolato complexes [33, 34]. The inter-atomic distances within the five-membered triazole ring (N1–N2 (1.3316(19)Å), N2–N3 (1.3397(19)Å), N1–C1 (1.341(2)Å), N3–C2 (1.351(2)Å) and C1–C2 (1.396(2)Å)), are typical, consistent with the delocalization of the electrons within the heterocycle. The bond angles of N1–N2–N3 (112.83(13)°), N2–N3–C2 (105.10(13)°), N3–C2–C1 (108.22(14)°), N1–C1–C2 (107.66(14)°) and N2–N1–C1 (106.18(13)°) are all in the range of C(sp<sup>2</sup>) and N(sp<sup>2</sup>) hybridization of a five-membered heterocycle ring. The five-membered triazole ring exhibits an irregular pentagonal structure and is essentially planar.

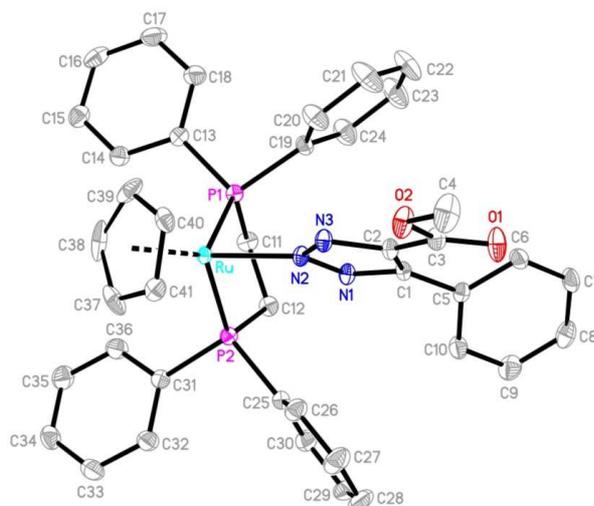


**Fig. 1.** ORTEP drawing of **2**; thermal ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level.

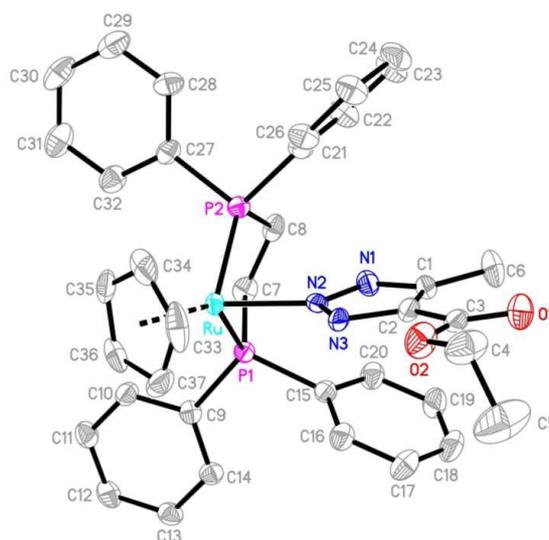
The molecular structures of complexes **3-5** are identical to **2**, which can be described as distorted piano-stool geometry, with the central atom being surrounded by  $C_5H_5$ , triazolate and two phosphine ligands. The bond lengths and angles of **4** and **5** are essentially identical to **2** and those of the triazole rings of **2**, **4** and **5** are with derivatives below  $0.02 \text{ \AA}$  and  $0.3^\circ$ , respectively, indicating that the electronic and steric influences of substituents in the 4- and 5- position on the triazolate rings of **2**, **4** and **5** on the parameters are negligible. The steric effects between the  $CO_2Et$ ,  $C_6H_5$  and  $CH_3$  groups are only slightly different and have no obvious effects on the structures of **2**, **4** and **5**. The electron withdrawing and donating ability of the three substrates on the tetrazolates seems have no obvious effects on the structures neither. It is worth noting that the bond lengths and angles of **3** are slightly different from the others. For **3**, the Ru-N2 bond distance ( $2.167(7) \text{ \AA}$ ) is slightly longer than those in compound **2**, **4** and **5**, which can be attributed to the larger steric effects between the  $CF_3$  group of the triazole ring ligand and the bulky dppe ligand. The N1-N2, N2-N3 and N1-C1 distances of  $1.299(12)$ ,  $1.263(12)$  and  $1.334(12)$ , respectively, are slightly shorter than those of **2**, **4** and **5**, indicating a marginally smaller structure of the triazolate ring of **3**. The inter-atomic bond angles N1-N2-N3 ( $119.1(8)^\circ$ ), N2-N3-C2 ( $103.3(8)^\circ$ ), N3-C2-C1 ( $106.4(9)^\circ$ ), N1-C1-C2 ( $108.7(9)^\circ$ ) and N2-N1-C1 ( $102.4(8)^\circ$ ) of the triazolate ring of **3** are slightly deviated from those of **2**, **4** and **5**, indicating that the shape of the five-membered triazole ring of **3** is slightly distorted in comparison with those of **2**, **4** and **5**, which could be due to the more steric-expulsive  $CF_3$  substituent on the triazolate ligand of **3**. Apparently, the steric effects appear to be the major determinant for the N(2)-bonding mode and structures of **2-5** but that electronic effects appear to account for their conformation.



**Fig. 2.** ORTEP drawing of **3**; thermal ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level.



**Fig. 3.** ORTEP drawing of **4**; thermal ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level.

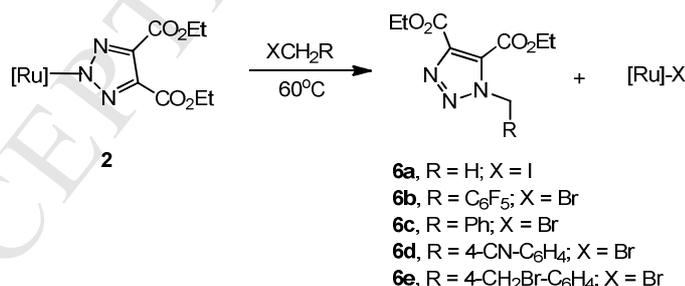


**Fig. 4.** ORTEP drawing of **5**; thermal ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level.

### 3.2. Reactions of **2-5** with electrophiles

The treatment of **2** with a 10-fold excess of  $\text{CH}_3\text{I}$  in  $\text{CHCl}_3$  at room temperature for one week or at  $60^\circ\text{C}$  in a silicone oil bath for 24 h resulted in the cleavage of the Ru-N bond and the formation of  $[\text{Ru}]\text{-I}$  and a colorless liquid, which is 1-methyl-4,5-bis(ethoxycarbonyl)-1,2,3-triazole  $\text{N}_3(\text{CH}_3)\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$  (**6a**), in 60 % isolated yield (Scheme 2). The reaction was monitored by NMR spectroscopy. When **2** was treated with  $\text{CH}_3\text{I}$  in  $\text{CDCl}_3$  at  $60^\circ\text{C}$  for 24 h, the  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectral resonance for **2**

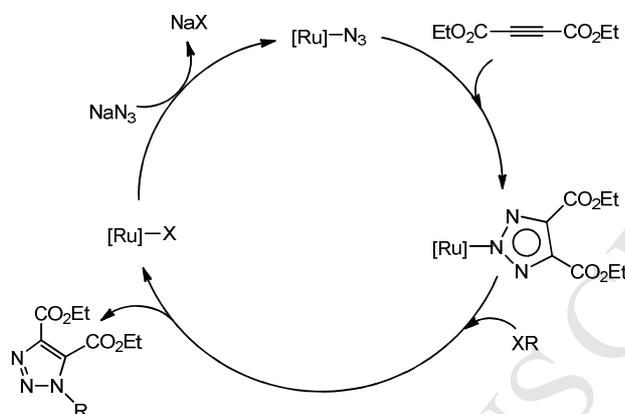
at  $\delta$  87.9 disappeared and a peak at  $\delta$  79.0, attributed to [Ru]-I, appeared. In the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum a singlet resonance appeared at  $\delta$  4.50, attributed to the Cp of [Ru]-I, and two quartet signals centered at  $\delta$  4.24, 4.10 (q, 2H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz) and two triplet signals centered at  $\delta$  1.12, 1.07 (t, 3H,  $J_{\text{H-H}} = 7.2$  Hz) appeared, which are attributed to the formation of the free organic triazole **6a**. The FAB mass spectrum of the crude mixture displayed molecular ion peaks at  $m/z$  720.2 and 228.1, attributed to [Ru]-I and **6a**, respectively. A similar reaction of **2** with other organic bromides resulted in Ru-N bond cleavage to give a series of 1,4,5-trisubstituted-1,2,3-triazole complexes. The cleavage of the Ru-N bond of **2** was a very slow process at room temperature, requiring more than 7 days to reach completion. We accelerated the reaction by conducting the reaction at  $60^\circ\text{C}$  in a silicone oil bath for 24-48 hours, which afforded the 1-alkylated-4,5-bis(ethoxycarbonyl)-1,2,3-triazole  $\text{N}_3(\text{R})\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Et})_2$  (**6b**, R =  $\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{F}_5$ ; **6c**, R =  $\text{CH}_2\text{Ph}$ ; **6d**, R =  $\text{CH}_2(4\text{-CN-C}_6\text{H}_4)$ ; **6e**, R =  $\text{CH}_2(4\text{-CH}_2\text{Br-C}_6\text{H}_4)$ ) and [Ru]-Br (Scheme 2). The structure of these free triazoles were clearly established as N(1)-alkylated based on their  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra, which exhibited two sets of AB pattern proton resonances for their anisochronous ethoxycarbonyl groups. [Ru]-Br is easily isolated as an orange-yellow precipitate in a cold *n*-pentane solution with a high recycling ratio but the organic triazoles **6b-6e**, which were mixed with the excess organic bromide in *n*-pentane, were difficult to isolate in pure form. Nelson and co-workers [39] examined the alkylation of the cobalt triazolato complexes, but the isolation of the free triazole was also not successful.



Scheme 2.

Complexes **2** and the triazoles **6a-6e** are stable in air and in solution, which permitted these reactions to be carried out under an atmosphere of air. The [Ru]-Br, which, on reacting with sodium azide, would afford [Ru]- $\text{N}_3$  (**1**) thus forming a reaction cycle (Scheme 3). Most of the procedures in this cycle could be carried out under an atmosphere of air, thus providing an economical and convenient approach for the synthesis of functionalized 1,4,5-trisubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles and derivatives thereof. In

addition, the 1,2,3-triazole and derivatives prepared in CuAAC and RuAAC reactions are largely limited to 1,4-disubstituted and 1,5-disubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles. The reaction reported here, therefore, represents a complementary method for the synthesis of fully decorated 1,4,5-trisubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles.

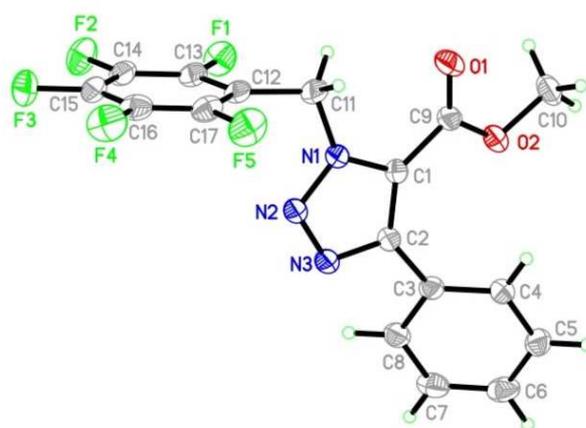


**Scheme 3.**

We recently reported [34] that the triazolato complex  $[\text{Ru}]\text{N}_3\text{C}_2\text{HCO}_2\text{Et}$  reacts with a series of alkyl halides to regioselectively alkylate the triazole ring. Since all of the triazolato complexes **3-5** contain an N(2)-bound triazolato, this prompted us to determine if they would react similarly to produce regioselectively alkylated triazoles. Accordingly, complexes **3-5** were reacted with alkyl halides in  $\text{CDCl}_3$  in a 5-mm NMR tube, and the progress of the reaction was followed by  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectroscopy. No alkylation was observed when **3** was treated with an excess of an electrophile such as  $\text{BrCH}_2\text{C}_6\text{F}_5$ ,  $\text{BrCH}_2\text{Ph}$  and  $\text{CH}_3\text{I}$ , even under drastic, vigorous conditions.

Treatment of **4** with a 10-fold excess of  $\text{BrCH}_2\text{C}_6\text{F}_5$  in  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$  on a  $60^\circ\text{C}$  silicon oil bath for 48 h afforded a  $\text{N}^3$ -alkylated triazole  $\text{N}_3(\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Me})(\text{Ph})$  ( $\text{N}^3$ -**7a**) and a trace amount of  $\text{N}^1$ -alkylated regioisomer. The reaction was monitored by  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectroscopy. When **4** was treated with a 10-fold excess of  $\text{BrCH}_2\text{C}_6\text{F}_5$  in  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$  on a  $60^\circ\text{C}$  silicon oil bath, in the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR two set of singlet resonances of  $\text{NCH}_2$  and  $\text{CCH}_3$  appeared at  $\delta$  6.00, 3.87 and  $\delta$  5.15 and 3.82, attributed to of the  $\text{N}^3$ -alkylated triazole, the major product, and the  $\text{N}^1$ -alkylated triazole, the minor product, respectively, in a ratio of *ca.* 8:1. The FAB mass spectrum of the crude mixture displayed parent peaks at  $m/z$  646.1 and 384.1, attributed to  $[\text{Ru}]\text{-Br}$  and the 1,4,5-trisubstituted triazole  $\text{N}_3(\text{CH}_2\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)\text{C}_2(\text{CO}_2\text{Me})(\text{Ph})$  (**7a**), respectively. Colorless crystals of  $\text{N}^3$ -**7a** were formed by slow evaporation of the solvent of the crude mixture. The structure of  $\text{N}^3$ -**7a** was determined by a single crystal X-ray diffraction analysis. Although the unit cell of  $\text{N}^3$ -**7a** contains two crystallographically different molecules, only one molecule is

displayed due to the difference being insignificant. An ORTEP drawing is shown in Fig. 5 and the selected bond distances and angles are listed in Table 3. In **N<sup>3</sup>-7a**, the 4-phenyl-5-methoxycarbonyl-triazole moiety is N(1)-alkylated by the pentafluorobenzyl group. The N1–N2, N2–N3, N1–C1, N3–C2 and C1–C2 bond lengths of 1.3348(16), 1.3133(16), 1.3625(17), 1.3621(17) and 1.3852(17) Å, respectively, all displaying partial double-bond character, are indicative of several resonance contributions and the five-membered triazole ring is essentially planar and aromatic. The N1–N2–N3, N2–N3–C2, N2–N1–C1, N1–C1–C2 and N3–C2–C1 bond angles of 107.72(11)°, 109.40(11)°, 110.76(11)°, 104.47(11)° and 107.65(12)°, respectively, are indicative of the irregular pentagonal structure of the triazole ring.



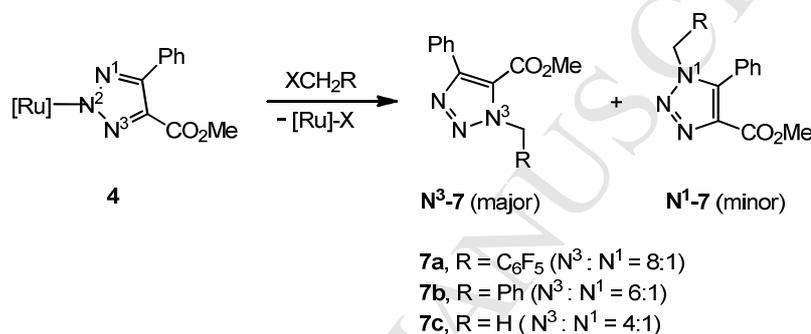
**Fig. 5.** ORTEP drawing of **N<sup>3</sup>-7a**; thermal ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level.

**Table 3**

Selected bond distances (Å) and angles (°) for **N<sup>3</sup>-7a**

|           |            |          |            |
|-----------|------------|----------|------------|
| N1–N2     | 1.3348(16) | N2–N3    | 1.3133(16) |
| N1–C1     | 1.3625(17) | N3–C2    | 1.3621(17) |
| C1–C2     | 1.3852(18) | C2–C3    | 1.4798(18) |
| C1–C9     | 1.2059(16) | O1–C9    | 1.2032(17) |
| N1–C11    | 1.4785(17) | O2–C9    | 1.3253(18) |
| N1–N2–N3  | 107.72(11) | N2–N3–C2 | 109.40(11) |
| N2–N1–C1  | 110.76(11) | N3–C2–C1 | 107.65(12) |
| N1–C1–C2  | 104.47(11) | N3–C2–C3 | 117.91(11) |
| C1–N1–C11 | 130.30(11) | C1–C2–C3 | 134.42(12) |
| N2–N1–C11 | 118.93(11) | N1–C1–C9 | 120.57(12) |
| C2–C1–C9  | 134.91(13) | C1–C9–O1 | 123.35(13) |

Similar reaction of **4** with BrCH<sub>2</sub>Ph and CH<sub>3</sub>I both afforded N<sup>3</sup>- and N<sup>1</sup>-alkylated triazole N<sub>3</sub>(CH<sub>2</sub>R)C<sub>2</sub>(Ph)(CO<sub>2</sub>Me) in a ratio of *ca.* 6:1 and 4:1 (calculated from the integration of the NCH<sub>2</sub> signals of the two regioisomers in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra and assigned by comparing with the NCH<sub>2</sub> signals of **6a-6e** and **7a**), respectively. The two regioisomers could be produced by electrophilic attack of CH<sub>2</sub>R<sup>+</sup> at both the N<sup>1</sup> and N<sup>3</sup> nitrogen and the subsequent liberation of the alkylated triazoles gave two triazole regioisomers (Scheme 4). The results indicate that the alkylation of **4** is not regiospecific, but highly regioselective.



**Scheme 4.**

When **5** was treated with a 10-fold excess of CH<sub>3</sub>I in CDCl<sub>3</sub> at room temperature for 3 days, two sets of characteristic singlet resonances at  $\delta$  4.24, 2.50 and 3.96, 2.54, attributed to NCH<sub>3</sub>, CCH<sub>3</sub> of two regioisomers of the organic 1,4,5-trisubstituted triazole, respectively, appeared at the same time in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum. The ratio of the two regioisomers was determined to be *ca.* 1:2. Similar alkylation reactions of **5** with BrCH<sub>2</sub>Ph and BrCH<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>F<sub>5</sub> at room temperature resulted in Ru-N bond cleavage and both afforded two regioisomers in ratios of *ca.* 1:2 and 2:3, respectively. The results of the NMR experiments indicate that the alkylation of the triazolato complex **5** is not regiospecific and regioselectivity is low.

The different alkylation reaction temperatures between complexes **2-5** indicate that the reactivity of these systems is highly related to these substituents on the triazole rings of complexes being used. The steric hindrance of a bulkier CF<sub>3</sub> group substituted on the triazole ring of **3** appears to disfavor the electrophilic attack of organic halides, since no reaction was observed, even at temperatures of 100°C or above. The alkylation of **4**, which is substituted with a moderately steric bulky phenyl group, was activated at higher temperature with more regioselectivity but no regiospecificity. The least steric hindered CH<sub>3</sub> group substituted on the triazole ring of **5** favors an electrophilic attack even at room temperature but lacks regioselectivity. These results indicated that the

steric effects of these substituents on the triazole rings of complexes **2-5** are the predominant factor and electronic effects are the minor factor for the reactivity and regioselectivity of the alkylation reaction.

### 3.3. Conclusion

We successfully synthesized a series of triazolato complexes by [3+2] cycloaddition reactions of ynoate esters with a ruthenium azido complex. The reaction products, metal-bound heterocyclic complexes such as the triazolato complexes [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)<sub>2</sub> (**2**), [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)(CF<sub>3</sub>) (**3**), [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Me)(Ph) (**4**) and [Ru]N<sub>3</sub>C<sub>2</sub>(CO<sub>2</sub>Et)(CH<sub>3</sub>) (**5**) were produced from diethyl acetylene dicarboxylate, ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoro-2-butynoate, methyl phenylpropionate and ethyl 2-butynoate, respectively. The resulting triazolato complexes, which were characterized by X-ray structure analysis, confirms the N(2)-bonding type of the addition products. In the study, we demonstrated that the steric effects appear to be the major determinant for the N(2)-bonding mode and structures of **2-5** but that electronic effects appear to account for their conformation. The Ru-N bond-cleavage of **2** occurred in the presence of an excess amount of organic halides, affording a series of 1-alkylated-4,5-bis(ethoxycarbonyl)-1,2,3-triazoles and [Ru]-X (X = I or Br), which, on reaction with sodium azide, gave the [Ru]-N<sub>3</sub> (**1**) thus forming a reaction cycle. Monitoring the alkylation reactions of organic halides with **4** and **5** by NMR indicated that, both gave two regioisomers of 1,4,5-trisubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles in different ratios, indicating that the alkylation reactions of both **4** and **5** are not regiospecific. Steric effects account for the electrophilic attack of ruthenium triazolato complexes and appear to be a determining factor for the conformation of the thus formed 1,4,5-trisubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles. We are currently in the process of further exploring the synthesis and the reactivity of new ruthenium triazolato complexes and new triazole derivatives. Studies of related reactions and applications of these complexes are currently underway.

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## Highlights

- [3+2] Cycloaddition of a ruthenium azido complex with four ynoate esters.
- Synthesis, characterization and reactivity study of novel ruthenium triazolates.
- The first example of the preparation of an N-coordinated metal triazolato complex using 2-butyne-1,3-diol.
- A reaction cycle to form 1,4,5-trisubstituted 1,2,3-triazoles.
- The X-ray structures of four ruthenium triazolates and one organic triazole were determined.