

Preliminary communication

Direct synthesis of acetals by rhodium catalysed hydroformylation of alkenes in the presence of orthoformate

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Abstract

The two catalyst precursors $[\text{Rh}_2(\mu\text{-penicillamine})_2(\text{CO})_4][\text{OTf}]_2$ and $[\text{Rh}_2(\mu\text{-cysteine})_2(\text{CO})_4][\text{OTf}]_2$ in the presence of 4 equivalents of $\text{P}(\text{OPh})_3$ in triethyl orthoformate as solvent and reactant, permit the low pressure hydroformylation of various alkenes into the corresponding acetals. Apart from a few low-yield by-products resulting from isomerization of the substrates, the carbonylated products obtained directly and exclusively are acetals.

Keywords: Hydroformylation; Rhodium; Catalysis; Acetals

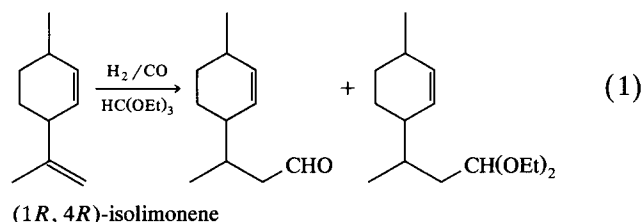
Acetals are protected forms of aldehydes, and several recent papers have described not only the catalytic conversion of an aldehyde into the corresponding acetal [1] but also the direct production of acetals by hydroformylation when identification of chiral compounds are required by NMR spectroscopy [2,3]. In particular, Stille and Parrinello have shown that hydroformylation of various prochiral alkenes catalysed by platinum–tin systems can be carried out in triethyl orthoformate, leading directly the diethylacetals of interest [2,3]. However, the introduction of trialkyl orthoformate as solvent or reactant causes a dramatic reduction in reaction rates. Cobalt catalysts have also been used but the yields remain very poor [4]. Recently Claver, Castillón, et al. carried out the hydroformylation of alkenes in triethyl orthoformate in the presence of pyridinium 4-toluene sulfonate and obtained high yields of the expected acetals [5,6].

In addition, Venanzi et al. have shown that aldehydes and ketones can be acetalized under mild conditions of temperature [1] using various rhodium precursors that

generate species with Lewis-acid character and contain the triphosphine $\text{H}_3\text{CC}(\text{CH}_2\text{PPh}_2)_3$.

We report preliminary results where 1-octene or monoterpenes are chemoselectively converted into diethylacetals by use of cysteine- or penicillamine-bridged dicationic dirhodium complexes as catalyst precursors.

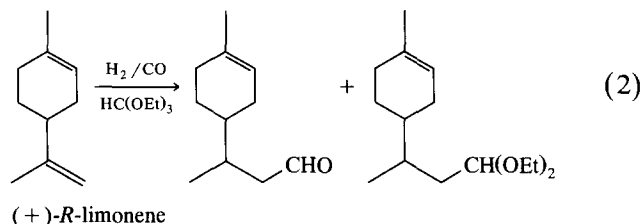
The classical hydridorhodium mononuclear complex $[\text{HRh}(\text{CO})\{\text{P}(\text{OPh})_3\}_3]$, in triethylorthoformate as solvent (molar alkene/rhodium ratio = 300) at 84 °C, 1.2 MPa and for 18 h gave a 31% conversion of *trans*-isolimone into a mixture of 50% acetal and 50% aldehyde, with a small amount of isomers of the substrate (Eq. 1).



The complex $[\text{Rh}_2(\mu\text{-S-}^i\text{Bu})_2(\text{CO})_2\{\text{P}(\text{OPh})_3\}_2]$ (molar alkene/dirhodium ratio = 600) in the presence of 10 equivalents of $\text{P}(\text{OPh})_3$ transformed 50% of

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limonene into carbonylated products with selectivities of 93% in aldehyde and only 7% in acetal (Eq. 2).



A similar experiment carried out with (1*R*, 4*R*)-isolimimonene (see Eq. 1) in the presence of 4 equivalents of P(OPh)_3 gave a 28% conversion, including 4% isomerization of the substrate, and a ratio of aldehyde/acetal of 96/4.

We have found that dinuclear precursors containing cysteine or penicillamine as bridging ligands can transform 1-octene, *trans*-isolimonene or β -pinene into acetal with complete chemoselectivity. Provided the reaction time was adjusted for each substrate, only minor amounts of isomers of the starting materials were produced (2-octene, terpinene or terpinolene..., α -pinene respectively).

The two thioamino acids $\text{HSCR}_2\text{CH}(\text{NH}_3)^+(\text{COO})^-$ [$\text{R} = \text{H}$ (cysteine **1**) and $\text{R} = \text{Me}$ (penicillamine **2**)], were used as bridging ligands to prepare the two tetracarbonyl complexes $[\text{Rh}_2(\mu\text{-1})_2(\text{CO})_4][\text{CF}_3\text{SO}_3]_2$, **3**, and $[\text{Rh}_2(\mu\text{-2})_2(\text{CO})_4][\text{CF}_3\text{SO}_3]_2$, **4**, that we isolated in the solid state. Addition of $\text{Ag}(\text{CF}_3\text{SO}_3)$ to $[\text{Rh}_2\text{Cl}_2(\text{CO})_4]$ in acetone under CO led, filtration of silver chloride and addition of **1** or **2**, to the two complexes **3** and **4**, in which the bridging ligands are $-\text{SCR}_2\text{CH}(\text{NH}_3)^+(\text{COOH})$ (Fig. 1).

Complex **3** shows three $\nu(\text{CO})$ bands at 2096 (s), 2073 (s) and 2027 (vs) cm^{-1} (KBr pellets) consistent with a C_{2v} symmetry, and no $\nu(\text{SH})$ band in the 2550 cm^{-1} region. The COOH group is characterized by its $\nu(\text{CO})$ band at 1740 cm^{-1} and the NH_3^+ group by its $\nu(\text{NH})$ band at 2955 cm^{-1} . Similarly, complex **4** has 3 $\nu(\text{CO})$ bands at 2084 (s), 2068 (s) and 2018 (vs) cm^{-1} ,

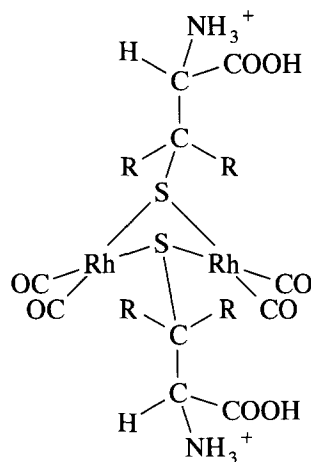


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram showing the two tetracarbonyl (μ -cysteine) or (μ -penicillamine) dirhodium complexes **3** and **4**.

a $\nu(\text{CO})$ band at 1733 cm^{-1} for the COOH group, and a $\nu(\text{NH})$ band at 2971 cm^{-1} consistent with a NH_3^+ group [7].

Addition of 4 equivalents of triphenylphosphite to complexes **3** and **4** in triethyl orthoformate generated active species which converted the substrates at 0.5, 1.2, or 2.1 MPa and 84 °C into the corresponding diethylacetals (Table 1). For instance **4**, 1-octene (row 1, Table 1) gave 87% conversion with only traces of 2-octene in 30 min. Two acetals were obtained with almost 100% chemoselectivity, the distribution being 1, 1-diethoxy-2-methyl-octane (18%) and 1, 1-diethoxy-nonane (82%). This catalysis corresponds to a turnover frequency of 1080 mol of product (mol^{-1} of precursor) $^{-1} \text{h}^{-1}$. (1*R*, 4*R*)-isolimonene (row 2, Table 1) reacted more slowly (53% in 3 h) and 47% of the acetal was produced. About 2% heavy-products and 4% isomers were identified.

Harsher conditions need to be used for β -pinene. Row 6, Table 1 shows that 2.1 MPa and 98 °C permit-

Table 1

Direct synthesis of acetals by hydroformylation of alkenes using $[\text{Rh}(\mu\text{-SCR}_2\text{CH}(\text{NH}_3)(\text{COOH}))_2][\text{OTf}]_2$ [$\text{R} = \text{H}$ (**3**), $\text{R} = \text{Me}$ (**4**)] as catalyst precursor ^a

Row	Catalyst ^b	Substrate	P (MPa)	t (h)	Conversion ^c (%)	Yield ^d (%)	By-products
1	4	1-octene	0.5	0.5	nd	87 ^e	traces of 2-octene
2	3	(1 <i>R</i> , 4 <i>R</i>)-isolimonene	1.2	3	53	47	isomers of isolimonene
3	3	(1 <i>R</i> , 4 <i>R</i>)-isolimonene	1.2	18	97	44	isomers and heavy products
4	4	(1 <i>R</i> , 4 <i>R</i>)-isolimonene	1.2	18	95	76	isomers and heavy products
5	4	(-)- β -pinene	2.1	18	56	52	α -pinene
6	4	(-)- β -pinene	2.1	18	80 ^f	71	α -pinene

^a Reaction conditions: 40 ml triethyl orthoformate, 60 mmol substrate, substrate/catalyst = 600, 0.4 mmol triphenyl phosphite, $\text{CO}/\text{H}_2 = 1/1$, $T = 84^\circ\text{C}$.

^b **3** or **4** prepared in triethyl orthoformate starting from 0.1 mmol of $[\text{Rh}_2\text{Cl}_2(\text{CO})_4]$.

^c Substrate converted measured by gas phase chromatography with an internal standart (acetophenone).

^d Yield in acetals.

^e Octene converted based on the total octene (1- and 2-) present, measured by gas phase chromatography with an internal standard (anisole).

^f $T = 98^\circ\text{C}$.

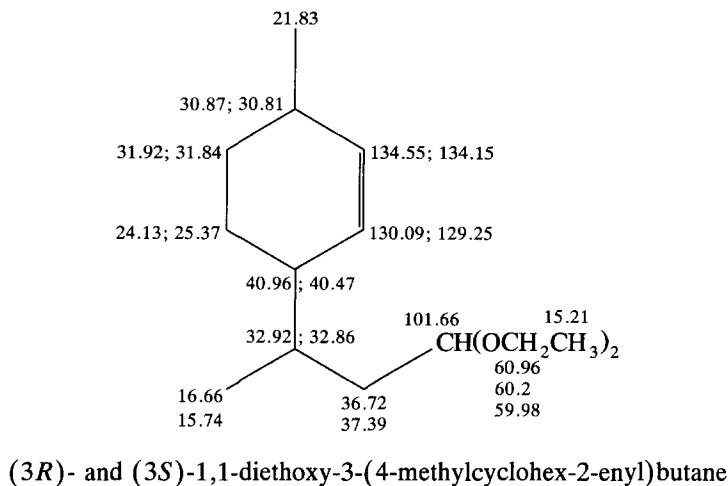
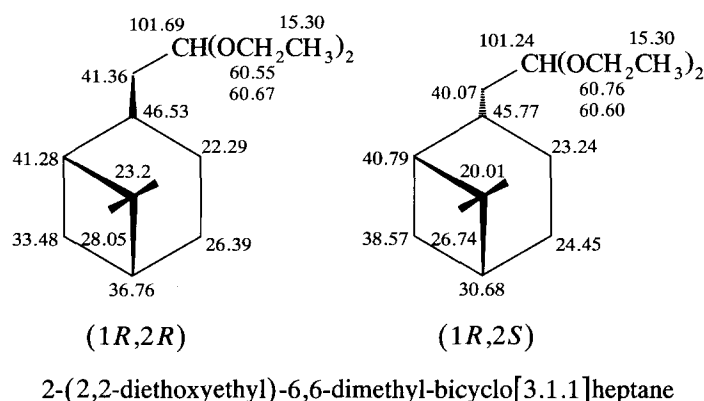
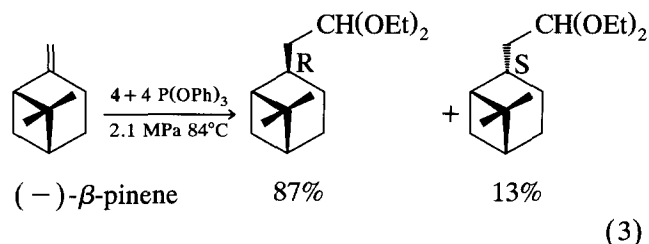


Fig. 2. ^{13}C NMR (62, 9 MHz, CDCl_3) data for acetals produced by hydroformylation of (–)- β -pinene and (1*R*, 4*R*)-isolimone in triethylorthoformate.

ted 80% transformation of the starting material in 18 h. However, at this temperature there was 8% isomerization to α -pinene, whereas at 84 °C only 4% isomerization occurred (row 5). The reaction is diastereoselective. A chiral carbon atom is formed, and the two configurations were obtained in a ratio of 87% (*R*) to 13% (*S*) i.e. a diastereoisomeric excess of 74% (Eq. 3) as observed by GC. However, in this case the two chiral bridging ligands do not improve the diastereoselectivity with regard to $[\text{Rh}_2(\mu\text{-S-}^t\text{Bu})_2(\text{CO})_4]$ plus $\text{P}(\text{OPh})_3$. Pittman et al. [8] have previously observed such an asymmetric induction (67% d.e.) in the absence of chiral ligands on their rhodium or cobalt precursors. However, they obtained mixtures of 3- and 10-formylpinane and the corresponding alcohols, depending on the reaction conditions.



Here, the two acetals resulting from (–)- β -pinene were isolated by column chromatography on silica gel (hexane, ethyl acetate) and identified by GC/MS, and ^1H NMR, and ^{13}C NMR spectroscopy (see Fig. 2). A similar procedure was carried out for (1*R*, 4*R*)-isolimone, and we also obtained the two acetals. In this case, no diastereoisomeric excess was observed.

The main benefit of using **3** or **4** as catalyst precursors in the hydroformylation reaction carried out in trialkyl orthoformate is to produce acetals directly in high yield with no decrease of the reaction rate.

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