

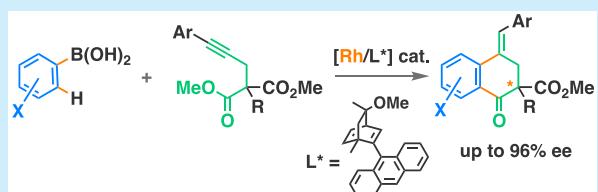
Enantioenriched 1-Tetralones via Rhodium-Catalyzed Arylative Cascade Desymmetrization/Acylation of Alkynylmalonates

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S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: An efficient atom-economic rhodium-catalyzed asymmetric arylative cyclization to access enantioenriched 1-tetralones, bearing a quaternary carbon stereocenter, is described, involving a highly regioselective alkyne insertion, a 1,4-Rh shift, and an acylation step via the desymmetrization of the malonate moiety thanks to an appropriate chiral diene ligand.

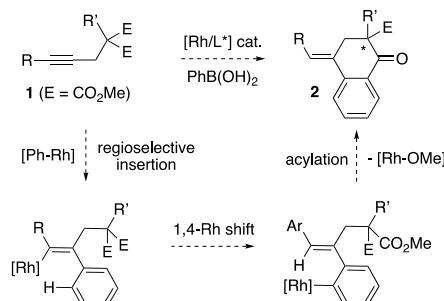


Enantioenriched 1-tetralones are useful building blocks in organic synthesis¹ and represent important scaffolds in a wide range of natural products and in molecules of medicinal and agrochemical interest.² While a variety of methodologies have been described to prepare racemic 1-tetralones,³ the access routes to enantiomerically enriched 1-tetralones by asymmetric catalysis are more rare and consist mainly in the functionalization of the 2-position of already formed tetralones.⁴ Given the importance of such substrates, more direct asymmetric and catalytic pathways for synthesizing the chiral 1-tetralone backbone in a single step, via the formation of multiple C–C bonds (cascade reaction) from simple substrates, would be highly desirable but are still in an early stage. Some approaches for the catalytic formation of chiral tetralones by intramolecular asymmetric cyclization reactions have been described, but require multiple steps and tedious preparation of the starting materials.⁵ To our knowledge, the only catalytic and enantioselective approach involving the formation of multiple C–C bonds from simple substrates consists of Tamura cycloadditions between homophthalic anhydrides and nitroolefins⁶ or α,β -unsaturated N-trityl imines.⁷

In our continuous work in rhodium-catalyzed arylative cyclization,⁸ we sought to develop an enantioselective synthesis of chiral 1-tetralones from easily available propynylmalonates and arylboronic acids (Scheme 1). This strategy relies on a regioselective control of alkyne insertion, rhodium 1,4-shift^{8c,d,9} to generate a new arylrhodium intermediate, and finally desymmetrization by reaction of the arylrhodium with one ester function, generating the ketone functionality and creating a valuable quaternary stereogenic center. Such an approach has been described by Murakami for the formation of racemic 1-tetralones using symmetrical alkynes, but a mixture of products, issued from nonregioselective insertion, was observed starting from unsymmetrical alkynes.¹⁰

Palladium- or rhodium-catalyzed arylative cyclizations of bifunctionalized substrates, initiated by organoboron reagents, constitute a versatile approach to construct complex chiral

Scheme 1. Proposed Approach to Chiral 1-Tetralones via Arylative Desymmetrization



molecules,^{8,11} but catalytic arylative cyclizations involving desymmetrization have been scarcely explored.¹²

In order to access tetralones via the previously proposed approach (Scheme 1), it is essential to control the regioselectivity of the alkyne insertion. This regioselectivity can be modulated by tuning the steric and electronic properties of the R substituent.¹³ We had previously shown that, in the presence of a 2-methylphenyl substituent, the aromatic ring of the boronic acid was introduced selectively into position 2 in the arylative cyclization of N-bridged yne-enoate derivatives.^{8c} However, under conventional conditions, the cyclization of substrate 1, where R is 2-methylphenyl, in the presence of phenylboronic acid leads to the formation of the expected tetralone 2 accompanied by uncyclized compound 3, resulting from the reverse insertion, in a ratio of 2:1 (Table 1, entry 1).

In order to promote the selective formation of 2 over 3, other R substituents have been evaluated (Table 1), an aliphatic substituent giving the opposite insertion.^{8c} In the presence of a 4-trifluoromethylphenyl substituent (entry 2), no cyclization occurred, and only regiosomers issued from the insertion/protonation process were observed. In order to force

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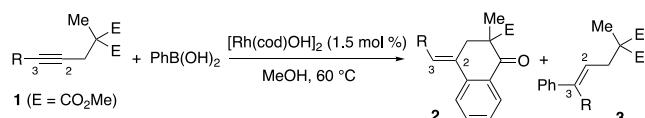


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Table 1. Formation of 1-Tetralones by Forcing the Regioselectivity of Alkyne Insertion^a

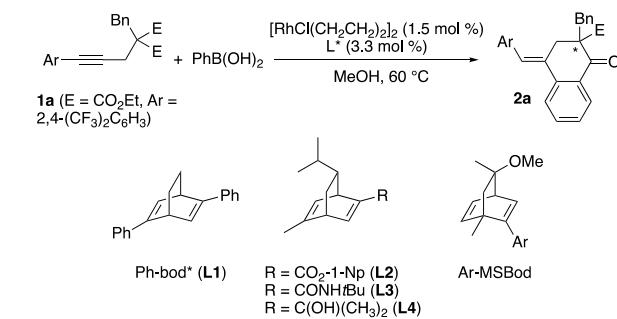
entry	R	yield ^b	2:3 ratio ^c
1	2-MeC ₆ H ₄	90	2:1
2	4-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄	63	^d
3	CO ₂ Me	^e	—
4	2-Me-4-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₃	72	2:1
5	2-iPrC ₆ H ₄	56	2:1
6	1-Np	nd ^f	2:1
7	2-MeOC ₆ H ₄	nd ^f	2:1
8	2,6-Me ₂ C ₆ H ₃	nd ^f	2:1
9	2-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄	61	>99:1
10	2,4-(CF ₃) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	68	>99:1
11 ^g	2,4-(CF ₃) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	75	>99:1

^aThe reaction was conducted with **1** (0.3 mmol), phenylboronic acid (0.6 mmol), and [Rh(cod)OH]₂ (1.5 mol %), in degassed methanol at 60 °C for 14 h. ^bIsolated yield. ^cRatio determined by ¹H NMR. ^d1:2.5 ratio of **3** and its regioisomer. ^eUntractable mixture of products. ^fNot determined. ^gBenzyl substituent in place of methyl and $E = CO_2Et$.

the expected insertion through 1,4-addition, an ester substituent was tested (entry 3), but an untractable mixture of products was obtained. For most of the R substituents evaluated, the 2:3 ratio was not modified and remained desperately equal to 2:1 (entries 4–8). We were pleased to find that an aromatic substituent, bearing at least a trifluoromethyl group in the ortho position, afforded exclusively the expected tetralone **2** with a good yield (entries 9 and 10), cleaner reactions being observed in the case of 2,4-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl (entry 10). This observation seems general, as total regioselectivity, favoring the formation of tetralone **2**, is also observed when the methyl substituent on the malonate is replaced by a benzyl group (entry 11).

After this successful switch in the regioselective insertion of the alkyne moiety allowing selective formation of 1-tetralones from alkynylmalonates, we envisioned the development of an asymmetric version to access enantioenriched 1-tetralones (Table 2). Among the chiral ligands evaluated, only dienes led to acceptable enantiomeric excesses.¹⁴ The disubstituted chiral dienes **L1–L4**, developed by Hayashi,¹⁵ did not lead to satisfactory results in term of enantioselectivity, the ee being less than 50% (entries 1–4). It is only by the use of the C₁-symmetric chiral Ar-MSBod dienes¹⁶ that significant enantioselectivities have been observed, in particular those bearing an aromatic disubstituted in both ortho positions (entries 5–11). We were pleased to find that the use of the chiral diene having an anthracen-9-yl substituent, a very bulky group, allowed not only an excellent yield but also a 85% enantiomeric excess in the arylative cyclization of alkynylmalonate **1a** (entry 11). It should be noted that the substituent on the ester function of the malonate has an influence on the enantioselectivity of the reaction: with dimethyl or diethyl malonates **1a** identical ee's were observed (85% ee) while, with a diisopropyl malonate, the enantiomeric excess is only 68%.

With these reaction conditions in hand, we examined the reactivity of diversely substituted alkynylmalonates **1** with arylboronic acids (Scheme 2). Alkynylmalonates bearing

Table 2. Chiral Dienes in the Desymmetrization of Alkynylmalonates^a

entry	Ln or Ar-MSBod (Ar =)	yield ^b (%)	ee ^c (%)
1	L1	79	2
2	L2	77	42
3	L3	83	47
4	L4	80	46
5	1-Np	90	38
6	2-Me-4-MeOC ₆ H ₃	78	45
7	2-iPrOC ₆ H ₄	58	35
8	2,6-(iPrO) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	67	13
9	2,6-(Me) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	54	54
10	2,6-(MeO) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	75	73
11	Anthracen-9-yl	94	85

^aThe reaction was conducted with **1a** (0.3 mmol) and phenylboronic acid (0.6 mmol), in the presence of in situ generated chiral L*-rhodium complex (3 mol % Rh) in degassed methanol at 60 °C.

^bIsolated yields. ^cee were determined by HPLC analysis using a chiral stationary phase (see Supporting Information).

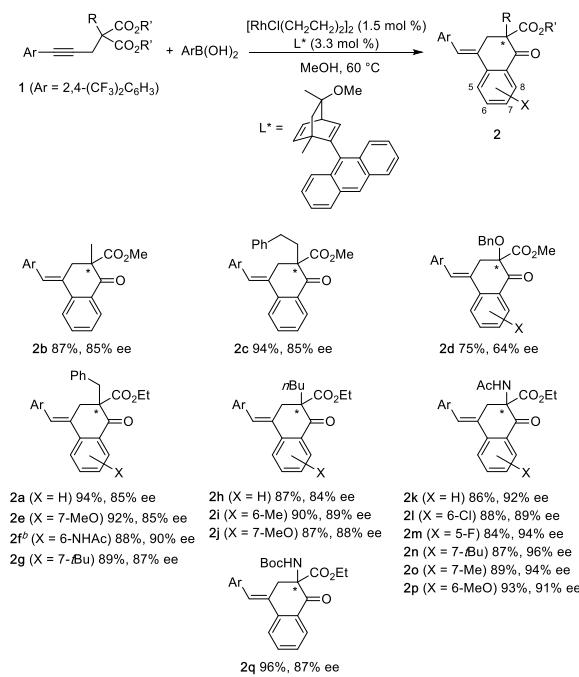
aliphatic (Me, nBu, or CH₂CH₂Ph) or benzyl substituents reacted smoothly to afford the expected chiral 1-tetralones with high yields and enantioselectivities ranging from 84% to 90%, depending on the arylboronic acid used. Even if tetralone **2d**, having a OBN substituent at the malonate junction, is obtained with a good yield, the enantiomeric excess is meanwhile moderate (64%). On the other hand, very good enantioselectivities have been obtained with NHAc or NHBoc substituents (85 to 96% ee), allowing an easy access to enantioenriched cyclic exotic amino acids bearing a tetralone moiety. Compound **2f** was also obtained on a larger scale, starting from 1.2 mmol of starting material, with a 90% yield and no erosion of the enantioselectivity.

The structure of 1-tetralone **2j** was confirmed unambiguously by single-crystal X-ray analysis (Figure 1). The absolute configuration of the stereogenic center of **2j** was determined to be (R) when anthracen-9-yl-MSBod was used as ligand.

We next examined the reactivity of the 1-tetralones, which can further be functionalized thanks to its versatile functional groups such as an ester, a ketone, and an exocyclic double bond. As an illustration, the reactivity of the exocyclic double bond has been studied: the ruthenium-catalyzed oxidative cleavage¹⁷ of tetralone **2p** gave the corresponding chiral dihydro-naphthoquinone **3p** in 74% yield, with no erosion of the enantioselectivity, a motif prevalent in a wide range of natural and synthetic compounds (Scheme 3).¹⁸

In summary, we have described, for the first time, an efficient atom-economic asymmetric arylative cyclization to access chiral enantioenriched 1-tetralones bearing a quaternary carbon stereocenter. The success of the overall process relies on a highly regioselective alkyne insertion, a 1,4-Rh shift, and

Scheme 2. Chiral 1-Tetralones from Rh/Chiral Diene-Catalyzed Arylative Desymmetrization of 1^a



^aThe reactions were conducted with 1 (0.3 mmol) and arylboronic acid (0.6 mmol), in the presence of in situ generated chiral L*-rhodium complex (3 mol % Rh) in degassed methanol at 60 °C. Isolated yields indicated and ee were determined by HPLC analysis using a chiral stationary phase (see Supporting Information). ^b90% yield and 90% ee on reaction conducted with 1.2 mmol of starting material.

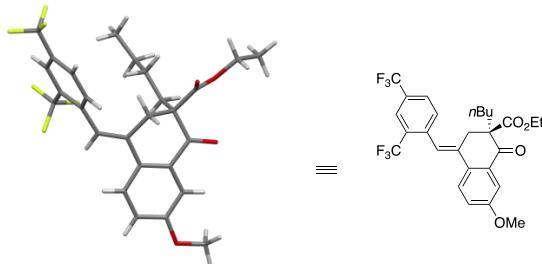
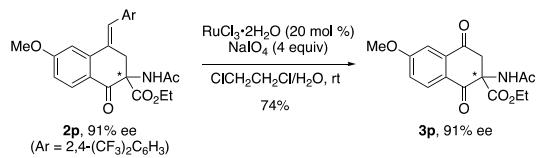


Figure 1. X-ray crystal structure of (R)-2j.

Scheme 3. Formation of Chiral Dihydronaphthoquinones



an acylation step via the desymmetrization of the malonate moiety thanks to an appropriate chiral diene ligand.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: [10.1021/acs.orglett.9b03153](https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.orglett.9b03153).

Experimental procedures, description of the compounds, and X-ray diffraction of 2j ([PDF](#))

Accession Codes

CCDC 1926608 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif, or by emailing data_request@ccdc.cam.ac.uk, or by contacting The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK; fax: +44 1223 336033.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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