Pergamon

Tetrahedron Letters, Vol. 37, No. 44, pp. 8057-8058, 1996

0040-4039/96 $15.00 + 0.00

PII: S0040-4039(96)01824-2

Chiral Base-mediated Rearrangement of *meso*-Cyclohexene Oxides to Allylic Alcohols

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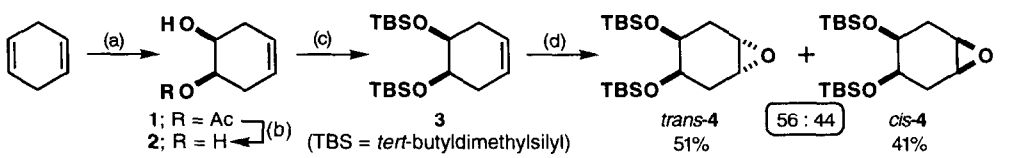
Abstract: Highly enantiomerically enriched allylic alcohols have been generated by rearranging single diastereomers of *meso*-cyclohexene oxides using a homochiral lithium amide base. PDC oxidation of each allylic alcohol product affords a different enantiomer of a synthetically useful cyclohexenone.

Asymmetric desymmetrisation of *meso* compounds is a particularly useful synthetic strategy and the success of enzymes for carrying out such reactions is well known.[1] More recently, non-enzymatic approaches have also emerged as useful methods[2] and one well studied area is the enantioselective desymmetrisation of *meso* cyclopentene oxides to allylic alcohols using chiral bases.[3] In contrast, chiral base-mediated rearrangement of substituted *meso* cyclohexene oxides has received scant attention and only one example has been reported: during work on the total synthesis of Laisol and Faranal, Mori used Asami's chiral base to rearrange a mixture of *trans* and *cis meso* cyclohexene oxides.[4] In this paper, we describe the synthesis of epoxides *trans*- and *cis*-**4** and their separate enantioselective rearrangement using Singh's[5,6] chiral base (*R*)-**7**.

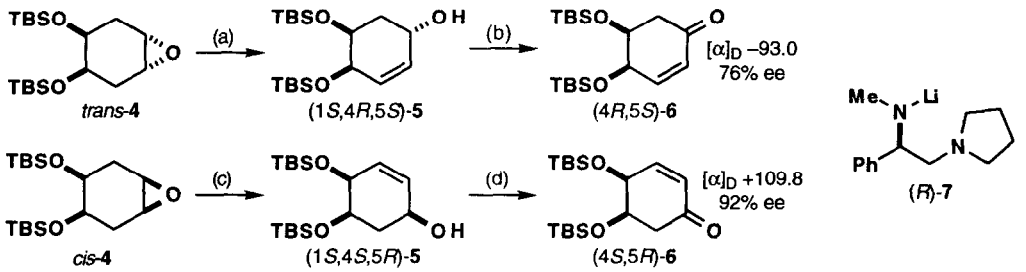


Reagents: (a) (i) KIO_3, I_2, AcOH, reflux, 3 h; (ii) KOAc, reflux, 3 h; (iii) water (48%); (b) Amberlite IRA(OH), 2:1 MeOH-THF, rt, 1 h (92%); (c) 2.4 eq TBSCl, 5 eq imidazole, CH_2Cl_2, rt, 16 h (97%); (d) *m*-CPBA, CH_2Cl_2, rt, 16 h (92%).

Our epoxide synthesis is outlined above. Using Krow's method,[7] 1,4-cyclohexadiene was converted into hydroxy acetate **1**[7] whose methanolysis to the known[7,8] water soluble diol **2** was best accomplished using commercially available (Aldrich) Amberlite IRA(OH).[8] Standard silylation generated the disilyl ether **3**.[9] Epoxidation of **3** proceeded with virtually no facial selectivity to give a 56:44 mixture of epoxides *trans*- and *cis*-**4** which were readily separable by chromatography. The relative stereochemistry of these epoxides was assigned by 500 MHz NOESY analysis.

Initially, epoxide *trans*-**4** was rearranged using 1.3 equivalents of Singh's chiral base (*R*)-**7** to give a 93% isolated yield of allylic alcohol **5** which had $[\alpha]_D$ –87.1 (*c*. 0.6 in $CHCl_3$). Conversion to its Mosher's esters[10] indicated that it had been generated with 76% ee. The major enantiomer was assigned as allylic alcohol (1*S*,4*R*,5*S*)-**5** by analysis of the ^1H NMR of the Mosher's esters.[11] This is the same sense (and a

similar degree) of asymmetric induction to that obtained by Singh when he used chiral base (*S*)-**7** to rearrange cyclohexene oxide itself.[5] In contrast, reaction of epoxide *cis*-**4** with chiral base (*R*)-**7** was much more sluggish and, after 20 hours, we isolated only a 38% yield of allylic alcohol **5** {$[\alpha]_D$ +20.4 (*c.* 0.6 in $CHCl_3$)}. It had 92% ee as shown by making the Mosher's esters and was identified as allylic alcohol (1*S*,4*S*,5*R*)-**5**.[11] In his study,[4] Mori also found that a related *cis* epoxide rearranged with higher enantioselectivity.



Reagents: (a) 1.3 eq chiral base (*R*)-**7**, THF, 0 °C → rt, 5 h (93%); (b) 1.3 eq PDC, CH_2Cl_2, rt, 3 h (78%); (c) 1.3 eq chiral base (*R*)-**7**, THF, 0 °C → rt, 20 h (38%); (d) 1.3 eq PDC, CH_2Cl_2, rt, 4 h (72%).

PDC oxidation[7] of each allylic alcohol afforded a different enantiomer of cyclohexenone **6**: (1*S*,4*R*,5*S*)-**5** gave (4*R*,5*S*)-**6** which had $[\alpha]_D$ −93.0 (*c.* 0.7 in $CHCl_3$) and (1*S*,4*S*,5*R*)-**5** gave (4*S*,5*R*)-**6** which had $[\alpha]_D$ +109.8 (*c.* 0.65 in $CHCl_3$). This further corroborated our stereochemical assignments of the allylic alcohols **5**. Enantiomerically pure enones like **6**, synthesised in four steps from (−)-quinic acid, have found widespread use in total synthesis.[12] However, to date, they have only been prepared in one enantiomeric form. Our route is similarly short (six steps from 1,4-cyclohexadiene) and allows acess to *both* enantiomers of enone **6** by rearranging either diastereomer of epoxide **4** with the same enantiomer of a chiral base or by rearranging a single diastereomer of epoxide **4** with either enantiomer of a chiral base.

Acknowledgements: The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 are acknowledged and thanked for the award of a Fellowship (to PO'B). We thank the EU for funding (of PP) under the ERASMUS Scheme, Dr S. B. Duckett for help with NOESY experiments and Professor R. J. K. Taylor for many useful discussions.

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(*Received in UK* 4 *September* 1996; *accepted* 13 *September* 1996)