

Gold(I)-Catalyzed Cycloisomerizations and Alkoxy cyclizations of *ortho*-(Alkynyl)styrenes

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Abstract: Indenes and related polycyclic structures have been efficiently synthesized by gold(I)-catalyzed cycloisomerizations of appropriate *ortho*-(alkynyl)styrenes. Disubstitution at the terminal position of the olefin was demonstrated to be essential to obtain products originating from a formal *5-endo-dig* cyclization. Interestingly, a complete switch in the selectivity of the cyclization of *o*-(alkynyl)- α -methylstyrenes from *6-endo* to *5-endo* was observed by adding

an alcohol to the reaction media. This allowed the synthesis of interesting indenes bearing an all-carbon quaternary center at C-1. Moreover, dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes can be obtained from substrates bearing a secondary alkyl group at the β -position of the styrene moiety by a tandem cycloisomerization/1,2-hydride migration process.

In addition, diverse polycyclic compounds were obtained by an

intramolecular gold-catalyzed alkoxy cyclization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes bearing a nucleophile in their structure. Finally, the use of a chiral gold complex allowed access to elusive chiral *1H*-indenes in good enantioselectivities.

Keywords: cycloisomerization • cyclization • gold • indenes • asymmetric catalysis

Introduction

Transition metal-catalyzed cyclization of polyunsaturated substrates has nowadays become one of the most valuable tools for the

straightforward synthesis of cyclic compounds under mild conditions.^[1] These processes frequently provide a significant increase in structural complexity furnishing functionalized molecules not easily accessible by conventional methodologies from rather simple precursors. Among all these strategies, the π -activation of alkynes by carbophilic Lewis acids, mainly gold or platinum derived complexes, towards attack by different nucleophiles has prompted the development of an impressive array of catalytically useful transformations.^[1,2] In this context, the use of olefins as internal nucleophiles has been extensively studied and therefore, a wide number of synthetically and mechanistically attractive metal-catalyzed cycloisomerizations of enynes have been described.^[3] The outcome of these rearrangements is determined by diverse factors, including the reaction conditions, the catalyst and the nature and position of the different substituents of the enyne.^[4]

In particular, 1,3-dien-5-yne, including *ortho*-(alkynyl)styrenes, although less studied than parent 1,5-enynes,^[5] have exhibited interesting transformations. Simple conjugated dienyne afford benzene derivatives through varied cycloaromatization mechanisms^[6] regardless of the dienyne and the catalyst employed.^[7] In contrast, the substitution pattern of the olefin plays a critical role in the cycloisomerization of *ortho*-(alkynyl)styrenes (Scheme 1). Thus, the skeletal rearrangement of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes α -substituted and mono- or non- β -substituted to produce naphthalenes through a *6-endo* cyclization process has been described using complexes derived from several metals such as W,^[8]

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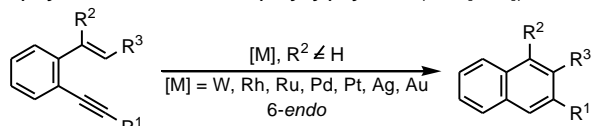
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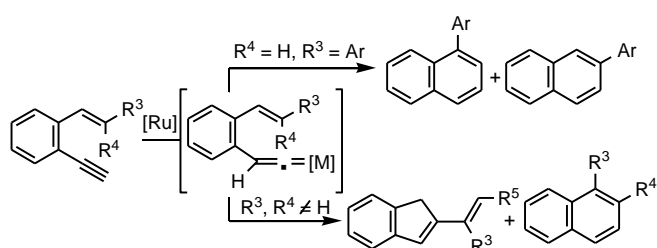
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Rh,^[9] Ru,^[9] Pd,^[9-11] Pt,^[9,11] Ag^[12] or Au^[9,13] as catalysts (Scheme 1a). Related cycloaromatizations of *o*-(alkynyl)biaryls also occurred allowing the efficient preparation of substituted phenanthrenes and other polycyclic heteroarenes.^[14] Notably, a total 6-*endo* selectivity is usually achieved in these reported cyclizations and only in particular examples the 5-*exo* adducts are formed,^[13a,c] whereas no products derived from a 5-*endo* cyclization are even detected. Moreover, Liu and co-workers have studied the ruthenium-catalyzed isomerization of *o*-(ethynyl)styrenes to give different products by a cascade reaction proceeding via formation of a vinylidene species (Scheme 1b).^[15]

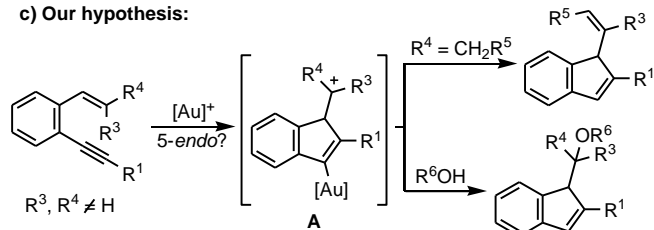
a) Cycloaromatization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes (refs. [8-13]):



b) Ru-catalyzed isomerization of *o*-(ethynyl)styrenes (ref. [15]):



c) Our hypothesis:



Scheme 1. Transition metal-catalyzed cycloisomerizations of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes.

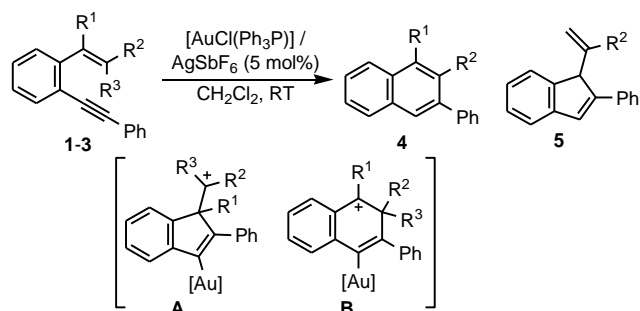
In this scenario we considered that *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes could evolve through a different reaction pathway to give 1*H*-indenes derivatives (Scheme 1c). Thus, our experience in the field of gold-catalysis^[16] led us to suggest that *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes possessing an internal acetylene and a disubstituted alkene ($R^3, R^4 \neq H$) should evolve through a 5-*endo-dig* cycloisomerization to give intermediate **A**. An elimination reaction from this cationic intermediate or treatment with an appropriate nucleophile (i.e. an alcohol) should deliver the desired 1*H*-indenes derivatives. Therefore, in a recent publication we have reported the gold(I)-catalyzed cyclization and alkoxylation of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes disubstituted at the terminal position of the olefin. This work proved our hypothesis and it allowed us to develop an efficient method to get functionalized 1*H*-indenes (Scheme 1c).^[17] In addition, we have also described an efficient synthesis of dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes from substrates bearing a secondary alkyl group at the β -position of the styrene moiety.^[18] Herein, we wish to report a detailed study on the evolution of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes under gold catalysis.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary results:

To test our hypothesis regarding the influence of the substitution pattern at the olefin moiety on the outcome of the cycloisomerization, representative *o*-(phenylethynyl)styrenes **1-3** were prepared. Starting from the simplest *o*-(alkynyl)-styrene **1a** ($R^1 = R^2 = R^3 = H$) we did not observe reaction in the presence of the cationic gold(I) complex generated in situ from 5 mol% of [AuCl(Ph₃P)] and 5 mol% of AgSbF₆ (Table 1, entry 1). By using the β -monosubstituted ($R^2 = Me$) *o*-(phenylethynyl)styrene **1b**, a mixture of unidentifiable compounds was formed (Table 1, entry 2). Next, we tried the reaction with the α -substituted ($R^1 = Me$) *o*-(phenylethynyl)styrenes **2a-c** (Table 1, entries 3–5). Considering previous reports (see Scheme 1a) and also the stability of the two possible formal intermediates **A** and **B** formed after activation of the alkyne and further attack of the olefin, we expected in these cases the formation of the corresponding 6-*endo* cyclization products. In fact, we isolated the naphthalene derivatives **4a-c** in very high yield. Finally, a key experiment was performed with the β,β -disubstituted ($R^2 = R^3 = Me$) *o*-(phenylethynyl)styrene **3a** (Table 1, entry 6). As previously commented, we thought that in this case the reaction should proceed through intermediate **B** to give the 5-*endo* product. Pleasantly, our plan came true and accordingly we observed how the reaction cleanly evolved to afford the indenyl derivative **5a** in a very high yield (88%).^[19] Remarkably, the reaction took place with complete regioselectivity as we did not observe the formation of products coming from 6-*endo* or 5-*exo* additions of the alkene to the carbon-carbon triple bond. A catalyst screening showed that several cationic gold(I) complexes, either preformed (such as [AuNTf₂(Ph₃P)]) or generated in situ with silver salts, were able to promote the indene formation within 30 min whereas no reaction was observed with metal complexes such as AgSbF₆, PtCl₂, [PtCl₂(cod)], CuI, AuCl₃, AuCl or [AuCl(Ph₃P)].^[20]

Table 1. Gold(I)-catalyzed cycloisomerization of model *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **1-3**.^[a]



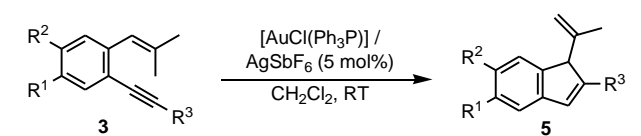
entry	enyne	R ¹	R ²	R ³	product	yield [%] ^[b]
1	1a	H	H	H	— ^[c]	—
2	1b	H	Me	H	— ^[d]	—
3	2a	Me	H	H	4a	83
4	2b	Me	Me	H	4b	84
5	2c	Me	Ph	H	4c	88
6	3a	H	Me	Me	5a	88

[a] Reactions conducted using 0.5 mmol of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative **1-3** in CH₂Cl₂ (1 mL) at RT. [b] Yield of isolated product based on starting material **1-3**. [c] Starting material was recovered. [d] Unidentifiable mixture of products based on ¹H NMR analysis of the crude.

Synthesis of 1*H*-indenes by cycloisomerization of 2',2'-disubstituted *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **3**:

The previous study allowed us to identify the structural requirements of the initial *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes to get 1*H*-indene derivatives.^[21] At this point, the importance of developing new methods to synthesize this skeleton should be remarked. Thus, 1*H*-indenes are found in pharmaceuticals,^[22] functional materials^[23] or as ligands in metal catalysis.^[24] Therefore, the present novel transformation seemed of interest and then, a deeper study on its scope and limitations was performed. First, reactions of 2',2'-dimethyl *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **3** with diverse substitution at the central phenyl ring as well as in the alkyne terminus were conducted under the optimized conditions; the results are given in Table 2. These data show that the formation of the corresponding indene derivatives is compatible with the presence of both electron-withdrawing (entries 2–3) and electron-donating groups (entries 4 and 8) at the aromatic ring. Moreover, different substituents at the alkyne (R^3), including aromatic (entries 1–4), heteroaromatic (entry 5), cycloalkenyl (entry 6), linear- and cyclo-alkyl (entries 7–10), and heteroatomic moieties (entry 11), are well tolerated. However, substrates bearing R^3 groups such as H, I or TMS gave only decomposition products under these conditions.

Table 2. Gold(I)-catalyzed cycloisomerization of 2',2'-dimethyl *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **3**.^[a]

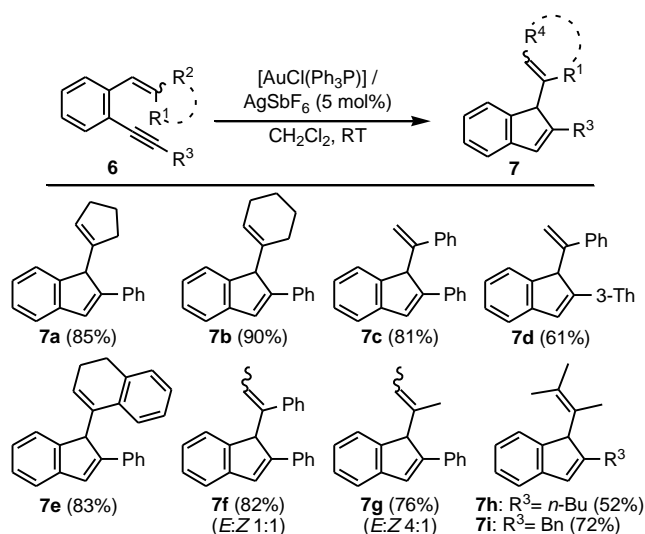


entry	3	R^1	R^2	R^3	5	yield [%] ^[b]
1	3a	H	H	Ph	5a	88
2	3b	H	F	Ph	5b	80
3	3c	H	Br	Ph	5c	88
4	3d		-OCH ₂ O-	Ph	5d	70
5	3e	H	H	3-Th ^[c]	5e	94
6	3f	H	H	<i>c</i> -C ₆ H ₉ ^[d]	5f	40 ^[e]
7	3g	H	H	<i>n</i> -Bu	5g	73
8	3h	OMe	OMe	<i>n</i> -Bu	5h	64
9	3i	H	H	<i>c</i> -C ₃ H ₅ ^[f]	5i	76
10	3j	H	H	<i>c</i> -C ₆ H ₁₁ ^[g]	5j	87
11	3k	H	H	SPh	5k	83

[a] Reactions conducted using 0.5 mmol of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative **3** in CH₂Cl₂ (1 mL) at RT. [b] Yield of isolated product based on starting material **3**. [c] 3-Thienyl. [d] Cyclohexenyl. [e] Using [AuNTf₂(Ph₃P)] as catalyst; partial decomposition of the product and/or substrate accounts for the low yield obtained. [f] Cyclopropyl. [g] Cyclohexyl.

Next, we decided to explore the regio- and stereoselectivity of the cycloisomerization with regard to the substitution at the terminal carbon atom of the alkene. So, *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **6** possessing different aliphatic and aromatic groups at this position were prepared and their reactions under the optimized conditions were conducted. As a result, several indenes **7** with both (hetero)aromatic and aliphatic groups at C2 were accessible from dienes **6** with total regioselectivity and in good yields (Scheme 2). For instance, reactions of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **6a-b** possessing an aliphatic ring as R^1 - R^2 substituent at the terminal position of the olefin, as well as **6c-f** with mixed aliphatic-aromatic substitution at the same carbon, efficiently furnished the corresponding carbocycles **7a-f**. Moreover, substrates **6g-i** bearing two different acyclic aliphatic groups at the β -position of the styrene moiety also produced the indene derivatives **7g-i**. In those cases where the formation of two *Z/E* isomers was possible (**7f,g**) we observed mixtures of these two

isomers, the *Z/E* ratio of which was independent of the substrate stereochemistry. As expected, formation of internal alkenes was preferred. Thus, in the reaction to get indenes **7g-i** we only observed the formation of less than 10% of the alternative isomeric indenes having a terminal alkene.

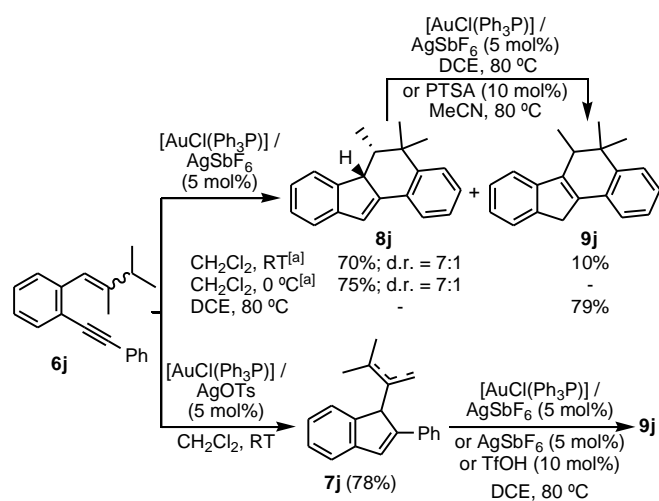


Scheme 2. Gold(I)-catalyzed cycloisomerization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **6** bearing different substituents at the olefin. 3-Th = 3-Thienyl

It should be noted that all the reactions depicted in Table 2 and Scheme 2 exclusively afforded in high yields the corresponding indene derivatives as a result of a 5-*endo* cycloisomerization and not even traces of regioisomeric 6-*endo* or 5-*exo* adducts were detected.

Interestingly, a new reaction pathway was observed for *o*-(alkynyl)styrene **6j** having an isopropyl and a methyl at the terminal position of the alkene (Scheme 3). Thus, its reaction under the developed optimized conditions gave less than 10% of the expected indene derivative **7j**. Instead, we observed the formation of a mixture of the tetracyclic compounds **8j** (70%) and **9j** (10%). Interestingly, these regioisomeric dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes are the result of a formal gold-catalyzed [3+3] cycloaddition.^[25] After screening several reaction parameters,^[18] we determined that **8j** was selectively obtained as a ca. 7:1 mixture of diastereoisomers^[26] in a 75% yield when conducting the reaction at 0 °C. In addition, **9j** was exclusively isolated in 79% yield by performing the reaction in 1,2-dichloroethane (DCE) at 80 °C. Remarkably, our initially desired indene derivative **7j** could be selectively isolated (78% yield) when the reaction was performed with the catalyst generated in situ from [AuCl(Ph₃P)] and silver tosylate (Scheme 3). In addition, indene derivative **7j** could be transformed into the dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorene **9j** by its treatment with our initial catalytic system ([AuCl(Ph₃P)] / AgSbF₆) but at 80 °C in 1,2-dichloroethane (DCE). On the contrary, when this experiment was performed at room temperature we did not observe the formation of the regioisomer **8j** indicating that this fluorene derivative is not directly derived from indene **7j**. Moreover, compound **9j** could also be obtained from **7j** by its treatment with catalytic amounts of AgSbF₆ (5 mol%) or triflic acid (10 mol%) in DCE at 80 °C. In a similar way, isolated dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorene **8j** could be transformed into its regioisomer **9j** under the initial reaction conditions that imply the use [AuCl(Ph₃P)] / AgSbF₆ (5 mol%), but raising the temperature to 80 °C. Also, the same transformation could be observed under acidic catalytic conditions

(10 mol% of PTSA) at 80 °C (Scheme 3). All these experiments seem to indicate that formation of compound **9j** is the result of a simple isomerization reaction of the initially formed compound **8j** under acid conditions. In a similar way, the transformation of **7j** into **9j** seems to be a protic acid catalyzed process.^[27]



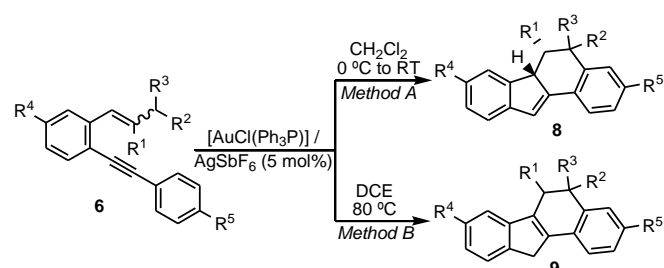
Scheme 3. Gold(I)-catalyzed cycloisomerization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene **6j**. [a] <10% of **7j** were also formed under these reaction conditions.

Synthesis of dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes **8** and **9** from *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **6j-w**:

Considering the novelty and interest of this transformation, as well as the common occurrence of the benzo[*a*]fluorene core in natural products possessing biological activity^[28] we decided to explore the extent of its scope. Thus, two methods *A* and *B* were employed to selectively obtain dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes **8** and **9** (Table 3). As previously observed for **6j** (entry 1), under the method *A* reaction conditions (0 °C or RT depending on the substrate) 6,6a-dihydro-5*H*-benzo[*a*]fluorenes **8j-t** could be obtained in good yields from *o*-alkynylstyrenes **6j-t**.^[29] High diastereoselectivities, ranging from 5:1 to >20:1, were observed in all cases. In the other hand, by using the method *B* reaction conditions a series of 6,11-dihydro-5*H*-benzo[*a*]fluorenes **9** were synthesized with total selectivity and very good yields (Table 3).

It should be noted that the process works nicely with either electron-withdrawing (entries 3–4) or electron-donating (entries 5–6) aryl substituents at the triple bond of the starting material, as well as with diverse substitution patterns at the alkene, provided that one of these groups is a secondary alkyl (entries 7–13). Particularly remarkable is the reaction of substrates **6r-t** (entries 14–19). These substrates are monosubstituted at the β -carbon of the styrene moiety ($R^1 = H$) and it should be noted that this type of substituted enyne derivatives did not give positive results in our initial experiments (see Table 1, entry 2). Here, for the first time we observed a clean evolution of these compounds to efficiently afford the corresponding formal [3+3] cycloadducts.

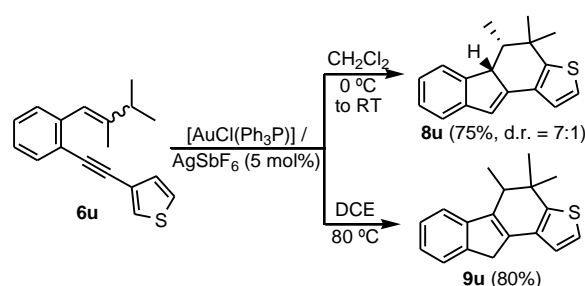
Table 3. Synthesis of dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes **8** and **9**.^[a]



ent.	6	R ¹	R ²	R ³	R ⁴	R ⁵	d.r. ^[b]	yield (8) [%] ^[c]	yield (9) [%] ^[c]
1	6j	Me	Me	Me	H	H	7:1	75	79
2	6k	Me	Me	Me	H	Cl	5:1	81 ^[d]	81
3	6l	Me	Me	Me	H	OMe	6:1	79	86 ^[d]
4	6m	Me	Me	Et	H	H	^[e]	68 ^[d]	^[f]
5	6n	Me	-(CH ₂) ₅ -	H	H	H	>20:1	75 ^[d]	84
6	6o	Et	Me	Me	H	H	5:1	71 ^[d]	^[f]
7	6p	Ph	Me	Me	H	H	>20:1	70 ^[d]	71
8	6q	Ph	-(CH ₂) ₅ -	H	H	H	-	^[g]	80
9	6r	H	Me	Me	H	H	-	72	72
10	6s	H	-(CH ₂) ₅ -	H	H	H	-	67	78
11	6t	H	Me	Me	Br	H	-	76	83

[a] Reactions conducted using 0.5 mmol of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative **6** in CH₂Cl₂ (1 mL) at 0 °C to RT (*Method A*) or in DCE (1 mL) at 80 °C (*Method B*). [b] Diastereomeric ratio of the corresponding product **8** determined by ¹H NMR of the crude reaction mixture. [c] Yield of isolated product based on starting material **6**. [d] Reaction conducted throughout at RT. [e] Obtained as a ca. 6:3:2:1 mixture of diastereomers. [f] Reaction not performed under *Method B*. [g] Reaction not performed under *Method A*.

We have also studied the applicability of these reactions for the construction of other polycyclic frameworks by changing the substituent at the triple bond (Scheme 4). In this sense, *o*-alkynylstyrene **6u** bearing a thienyl group reacted efficiently to afford the corresponding tetracyclic adducts **8u** and **9u** under conditions *A* and *B*, respectively. Nevertheless, reactions of substrates **6v-w**, possessing indolyl and cyclohexenyl groups linked to the triple bond and carried out under method *A* conditions, gave mixtures of the desired polycyclic compounds **8** and the corresponding indene derivatives **7** (see Supporting Information). In these cases, thermal conditions *B* led to low yields probably due to partial decomposition and, surprisingly, did not improve the proportion of [3+3] adduct over indenenes **7**.

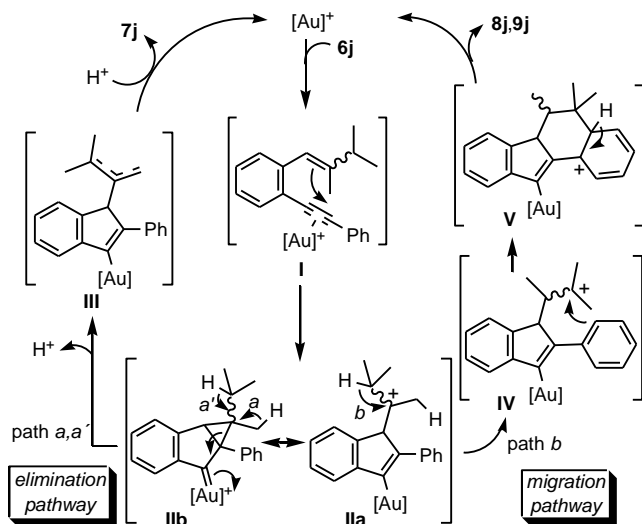


Scheme 4. Gold(I)-catalyzed cycloisomerization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **6u**.

Mechanism of cycloisomerization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes:

According to all these results we propose the mechanism shown in Scheme 5 to explain the formation of indenenes **5** and **7** and

dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes **8** and **9**. The proposal is illustrated for the model substrate **6j**.^[30] Thus, we suppose that the reaction is initiated by coordination of the cationic gold complex to the triple bond of the starting *o*-(alkynyl)styrene **6j** to give intermediate **I**. An intramolecular nucleophilic attack by the olefin leads to the cationic intermediate **II**, which can be represented as the contribution of resonance structures **IIa** and **IIb** that delocalize the positive charge along different positions of the molecule. Elimination of a proton in this intermediate, (path *a/a'*; elimination pathway), furnishes the vinyl-gold intermediate **III**, which after a protodemetalation reaction gives indene **7j** and releases the gold catalyst for a new cycle. On the other hand, intermediate **II** could also undergo a hydride migration, giving rise to cationic intermediate **IV** (path *b*; migration pathway). The subsequent Friedel–Crafts-type alkylation reaction affords the dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorene derivative **V**, which after protodemetalation furnishes compound **8j**, regenerating the catalytic species.^[31] So, the different behaviour observed for *o*-(alkynyl)styrene **6j**, which leads to **7j** or **8j** depending on the counterion of the gold complex, could be understood considering that the carbocationic intermediate **II** would evolve through the elimination pathway to afford **7j**, when the relatively basic tosylate anion is used. On the contrary, in the presence of less basic SbF₆⁻ anion the 1,2-hydride migration would predominantly take place to finally produce **8j**. Also, formation of fluorene derivative **9j** from indene **7j** can be easily explained through a protic acid-catalyzed reaction implying the protonation of the alkene,^[27] which would afford a cationic gold-free intermediate analogous to **IV**, followed by a Friedel–Crafts-type alkylation reaction. Finally, it should be noted that the formation of indene derivatives **5** from (alkynyl)styrenes **3** could be understood through a mechanism analogue to that shown for the formation of indene derivative **7j**.

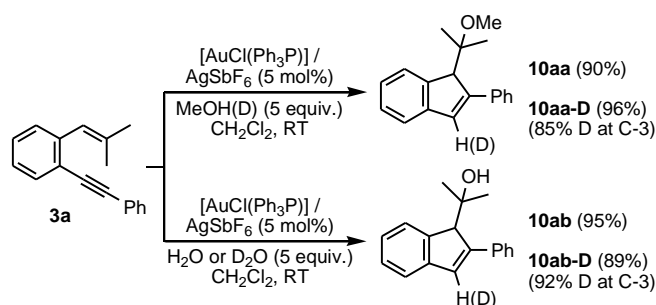


Scheme 5. Proposed mechanisms for the formation of adducts **7-9** illustrated for model substrate **6j**.

Synthesis of oxygen-functionalized *1H*-indenes:

Considering the above mechanism (Scheme 5), we thought that intermediate **II** could be trapped by the addition of an appropriate external nucleophile to the reaction media, and thus, new products with enhanced complexity could be easily obtained. Pleasantly, reactions of the model substrate **3a** conducted under the optimized conditions in the presence of 5 equivalents of methanol or water

exclusively afforded the oxygen functionalized *1H*-indenes **10aa** and **10ab** in excellent yields (Scheme 6). Moreover, parallel reactions using MeOD or D₂O as the nucleophile gave the deuterated compounds **10aa-D** and **10ab-D** that displayed, respectively, 85% and 92% deuterium incorporation at C-3.



Scheme 6. Gold(I)-catalyzed alkoxymercuration of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene **3a**.

The scope of the alkoxymercuration process^[32] to produce functionalized indenenes^[33] was then analyzed. First we found that besides methanol and water (Table 4, entries 1–2) other primary alcohols, including functionalized ones such as allylic alcohol or 2-bromoethanol, could be successfully employed as external nucleophiles in this transformation (entries 3–5). Even the isopropoxy derivative **10af** was obtained as the major adduct in 81% yield by using 20 equivalents of isopropanol as the nucleophile, though the competitive formation of **5a** took place in a small amount (entry 6). Then, using methanol and/or water as nucleophile a variety of functionalized indenenes **10** with selected substitution at R¹, R² and R³ were synthesized (entries 7–19). As expected by the results obtained in the cycloisomerization in the absence of nucleophile the reaction tolerates both electron-withdrawing (entries 7–10) and electron-donating (entries 11–12) groups at the internal phenyl ring as well as a broad range of substituents at the triple bond including (hetero)aromatic (entries 7–14), (cyclo)alkyl (entries 15–18), and heteroatomic moieties (entry 19). All these reactions were completely selective and we did not observe the formation of additional products derived from other possible reaction pathways. Thus, the corresponding indenenes **10** were isolated in good to excellent yields.

Table 4. Gold(I)-catalyzed synthesis of oxygen-functionalized *1H*-indenenes **10**.^[a]

entry	3	R ¹	R ²	R ³	R ⁴	10	yield [%] ^[b]
1	3a	H	H	Ph	Me	10aa	90
2	3a	H	H	Ph	H	10ab	95
3	3a	H	H	Ph	Et	10ac	85
4	3a	H	H	Ph	allyl	10ad	93
5	3a	H	H	Ph	(CH ₂) ₂ Br	10ae	85
6 ^[c]	3a	H	H	Ph	<i>i</i> -Pr	10af	81 ^[e]
7	3b	H	F	Ph	Me	10ba	95
8	3b	H	F	Ph	H	10bb	76
9	3c	H	Br	Ph	Me	10ca	87
10	3c	H	Br	Ph	H	10cb	78 ^[e]
11	3d	–OCH ₂ O–	Ph	Me	Me	10da	98
12	3d	–OCH ₂ O–	Ph	H	H	10db	72

13	3e	H	H	3-Th ^[f]	Me	10ea	94
14	3e	H	H	3-Th ^[f]	H	10eb	84
15	3g	H	H	<i>n</i> -Bu	Me	10ga	81
16	3g	H	H	<i>n</i> -Bu	H	10gb	78 ^[e]
17	3i	H	H	<i>c</i> -C ₃ H ₅ ^[g]	Me	10ia	77
18	3j	H	H	<i>c</i> -C ₆ H ₁₁ ^[h]	Me	10ja	80
19	3k	H	H	SPH	Me	10ka	84

[a] Reactions conducted using 0.5 mmol of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative **3** and 5 equiv. of nucleophile in CH₂Cl₂ (1 mL) at RT. [b] Isolated yield. [c] Reaction performed using 20 equiv. of *i*-PrOH. [d] 8% of **5a** was also formed. [e] Using AuNTf₂(Ph₃P) as catalyst. [f] 3-Thienyl. [g] Cyclopropyl. [h] Cyclohexyl.

To further test the scope of the process we explored the reaction with starting materials where the substitution at the alkene terminal carbon atom was different from two methyl groups. Some conclusions could be extracted from the results obtained and depicted in Table 5. The alkoxylation is completely selective with *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes 2',2'-disubstituted by either aliphatic or aromatic groups allowing the preparation of several functionalized indenenes **11** in good to excellent yields (entries 1–4). Moreover, and no surprisingly, the addition of the external nucleophile to the terminal carbon of the olefin was affected by the steric hindrance at that position as it was revealed for substrates **6g** and **6j**. Thus, reaction of **6g**, where a methyl group was replaced by an ethyl group, furnished the desired indene **11ga** in a moderate 55% yield with the concomitant formation of **7g** as a mixture of isomers and in a 29% yield (entry 5). In the case of substrate **6j**, bearing a methyl and an *iso*-propyl group at the olefin, the incorporation of methanol in the final adduct was totally suppressed and, therefore, a mixture of compounds **7-9j** was detected (entry 6). On the other hand, regarding the stereoselectivity of the methoxycyclization, the experiment conducted with a single isomer of **6c** gave methoxy-functionalized indene **11ca** as a 3:1 mixture of diastereoisomers (entry 3). In the same way, the reaction of **6d**, enriched in one geometrical isomer (6:1), produced the product **11da** with a lower diastereoselectivity (d.r. = 3:1) (entry 4). These results clearly revealed that the alkoxylation is not diastereospecific.

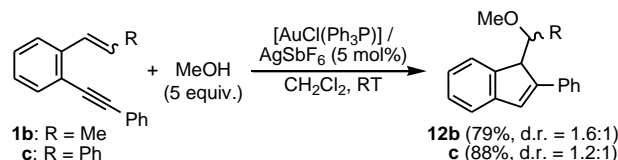
Table 5. Gold(I)-catalyzed alkoxylation of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **6** bearing different substituents at the terminal position of the olefin.^[a]

ent.	6	d.r. (<i>E:Z</i>)	R ¹	R ²	R ³	R ⁴	11	d.r.	yield [%] ^[b]
1	6a	–	–(CH ₂) ₄ –	Ph	Me	Me	11aa	–	96
2	6a	–	–(CH ₂) ₄ –	Ph	H	H	11ab	–	71
3 ^[c]	6c	1:0	Ph	Me	Ph	Me	11ca	3:1	88
4 ^[c]	6d	6:1	Ph	Me	3-Th ^[d]	Me	11da	3:1	75
5 ^[e]	6g	1.5:1	Me	Et	Ph	Me	11ga	1.5:1	55 ^[f]
6	6j	4:1	Me	<i>i</i> Pr	Ph	Me	–	–	– ^[g]

[a] Reactions conducted using 0.5 mmol of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative **6** and 5 equiv. of MeOH or 20 equiv. of H₂O (entry 2) in CH₂Cl₂ (1 mL) at RT. [b] Isolated yield. [c] Using [AuNTf₂(Ph₃P)] as catalyst. [d] 3-Thienyl. [e] Performed with 100 equiv. of MeOH. [f] 29% of **7g** was also formed. [g] A mixture of adducts **7-9j** was obtained.

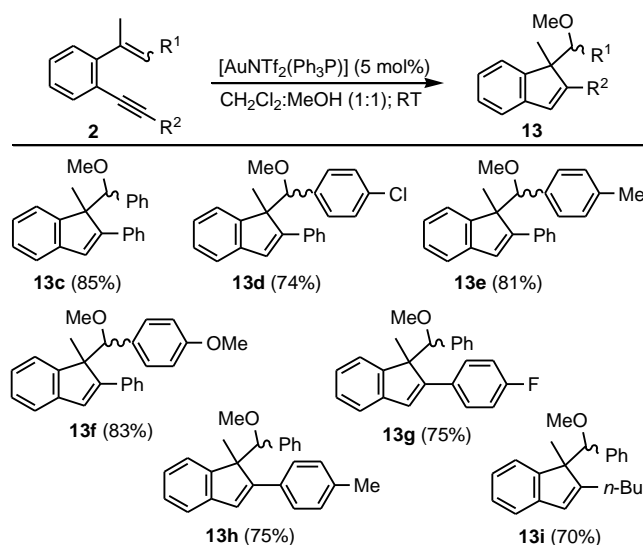
While working on the generalization of this reaction we obtained some unexpected results. Thus, as shown in Table 1 (entry

2), the reaction of enyne derivative **1b** monosubstituted at the β -position of the styrene led to a mixture of unidentified products when the reaction was performed under the conventional reaction conditions. Surprisingly, the same reaction performed in the presence of methanol (5 equiv.) led to the formation of methoxy-functionalized indene **12b** in good yield (Scheme 7). In the same sense, *o*-(phenylethynyl)- β -phenylstyrene **1c** reacted in the presence of methanol to afford **12c** in high yield (Scheme 7).



Scheme 7. Gold(I)-catalyzed alkoxylation of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **1**, monosubstituted at the terminal position of the olefin.

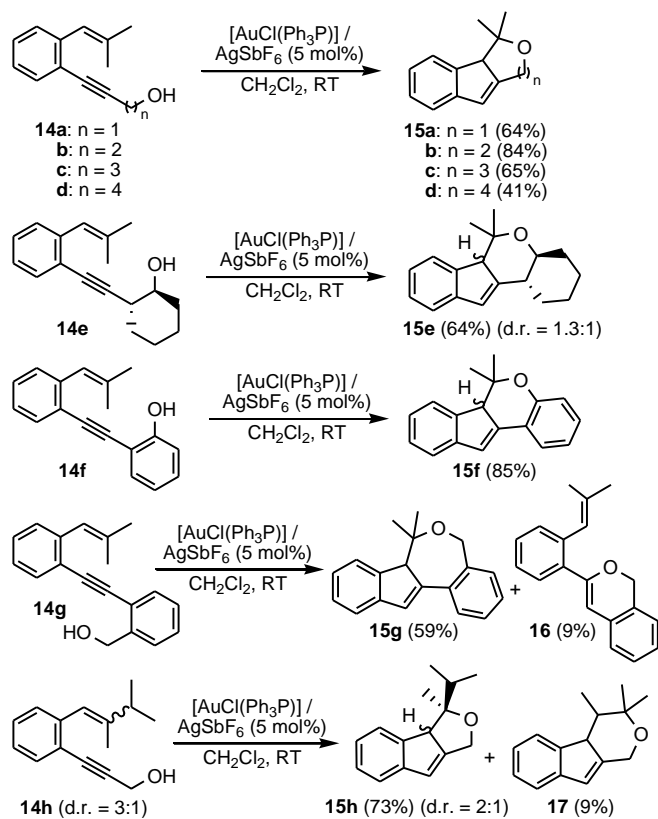
Other surprising results were found with enyne derivatives **2** substituted at the α -position of the styrene. Under conventional reaction conditions (see Table 1) these reagents selectively evolve to give naphthalene derivatives through a 6-*endo* cyclization process. However, an interesting switch of selectivity was observed when the reactions were performed with methanol as cosolvent of the process (Scheme 8).^[34] Under these conditions 1*H*-indenenes **13c-i** were isolated in high yields (ca. 2–1.5:1 mixture of diastereoisomers) as a result of a 5-*endo-dig* cyclization process.^[35] Notably, the alkoxylation occurred regardless the electronic nature of the aromatic groups at both the β -carbon of the styrene moiety and the alkyne terminus. In addition, the methodology also allowed the synthesis of alkyl-substituted indenenes at C-2 as demonstrated for **13i** (Scheme 9). Interestingly, in this reaction an all-carbon quaternary stereocenter is generated at C-1.



Scheme 8. Gold(I)-catalyzed synthesis of oxygen-functionalized 1*H*-indenenes **13** bearing a quaternary centre at C-1.

With the aim of accessing diverse polycyclic compounds we also tried the alkoxylation in an intramolecular fashion. To this end, we synthesized *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **14a-h** possessing a hydroxy group in their structure. Pleasantly, reaction of substrates **14a-c** proceeded smoothly under the standard conditions, generating indenenes fused to 5-, 6- and 7-membered oxygen-containing

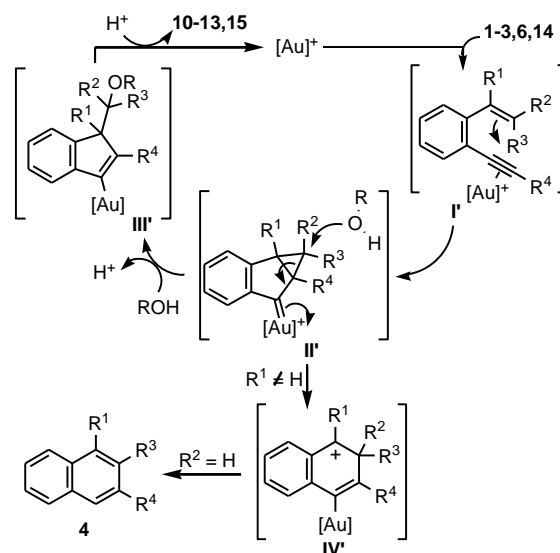
heterocycles in good to high yields (Scheme 9). Even **15d**, a tricyclic compound with a fused oxocane ring, could be obtained in a moderate 41% yield. Moreover, *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **14e-g**, where the nucleophile is appended to an additional cycle, also partook efficiently in the intramolecular alkoxy cyclization reaction, giving rise to the corresponding tetracycles. All these reactions were highly selective, and only in the case of **14g** formation of minor amounts of the product **16**, coming from direct attack of the alcohol to the triple bond was observed.^[36] Finally, we tried the reaction with the *o*-(alkynyl)styrene **14h**, possessing an isopropyl group at the terminal carbon of the olefin. It should be noted that the reaction of substrates with this type of substitution pattern did not react in an intermolecular fashion with an alcohol (MeOH) as demonstrated in our attempt shown in Table 5 (entry 6). However, the reaction of **14h** afforded as major product the furan derivative **15h** along with a very minor amount of pyran derivative **17** (Scheme 9).



Scheme 9. Synthesis of polycyclic compounds **15** by gold(I)-catalyzed intramolecular alkoxy cyclization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **14**.

The mechanism of all these alkoxy cyclization processes would initially follow a mechanism similar to that commented before for the simple cycloisomerization reaction (see Schemes 5 and 10). Thus, the reaction would start by coordination of the cationic gold complex to the triple bond of starting *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **1-3**, **6** or **14**, followed by intramolecular nucleophilic attack of the olefin leading to cationic gold carbenoid intermediate **II'**.^[37] However, in the presence of water or an alcohol, instead of the proton elimination suggested in Scheme 5, this intermediate **II'** would be trapped by the nucleophile generating vinyl gold intermediate **III'**. After a protodemetalation reaction, compounds **10-13** or **15** are formed and the catalytic species are regenerated (Scheme 10). As previously noted, a switch in the selectivity of the cyclization is observed for *o*-(alkynyl)- α -methylstyrenes **2** and thus, indenenes are obtained in the

presence of methanol and naphthalenes in its absence. These facts could be explained by supposing that in the presence of methanol the corresponding intermediate **II'** ($R^2 = H$; $R^1, R^3 \neq H$) rapidly reacts with the nucleophile at the less hindered position to afford the indene derivatives **13**. However, in the absence of an appropriate nucleophile, a ring opening reaction of intermediate **II'** gives the more stable benzylic cation **IV'**, which finally produces the naphthalene derivative **4** by proton elimination and subsequent protodeauration (Scheme 10). In addition, the generation of a minor amount of pyran derivative **17** (Scheme 9) could be easily explained through the formation of intermediate **IV** (see Scheme 5 and Supporting Information).



Scheme 10. Proposed mechanism for the alkoxy cyclization of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes.

Enantioselective synthesis of 1*H*-indenenes:

Once we had established the versatility of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes as precursors of indene derivatives we thought on the possibility of preparing these adducts in an enantioselective fashion by using chiral gold catalysts. Remarkably, the synthesis of optically active indenenes remains a challenge with only two recent strategies for the enantioselective synthesis of these compounds from achiral substrates having been published.^[38] Both approaches are based on the use of boronic acid derivatives as starting materials and their coupling in tandem reactions catalyzed by chiral palladium complexes producing the corresponding indenenes in good yields and variable enantioselectivities.^[39]

In this context, it should be noted that although gold catalysis has witnessed tremendous activity in recent years, its application in asymmetric synthesis is an underdeveloped area.^[40] Particularly, gold-catalyzed enantioselective processes involving alkyne activation are relatively scarce.^[35,41] Therefore, we were pleased to find that, after some optimization,^[42] we were able to obtain indene derivatives with good enantiomeric excess using the combination (*S*)-3,5-xylyl-MeOBIPHEP-(AuCl)₂ / AgOTs as catalyst in dichloromethane at -30 °C (Table 6). Under these optimized catalytic conditions we found high yields and enantioselectivities for *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **3a-e, 6a-b** where R^5 is an aromatic or heteroaromatic group (entries 1–4, 10–11). Interestingly, the possibility of increasing the enantiomeric excess of the final

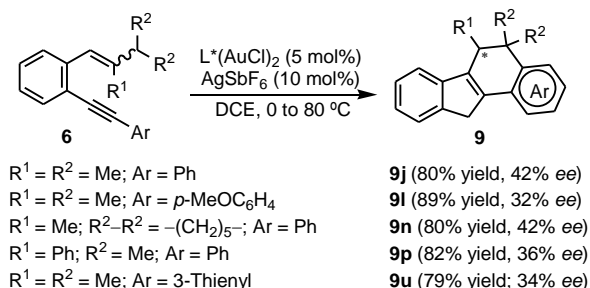
products by a simple recrystallization has been demonstrated for indene **7b** that we were able to isolate with 92% *ee* (entry 11). However, starting materials **3f-k** having alkenyl, aliphatic or heteroatomic substitution in the alkyne lead to low enantiomeric excess (entries 5–9).

Table 6. Enantioselective synthesis of 1-alkenyl-1*H*-indenes **5** and **7**.^[a]

entry	3,6	R ¹	R ²	R ³	R ⁴	R ⁵	5,7	Yield [%] ^[b]	<i>ee</i> [%] ^[c]
1	3a	H	H	Me	Me	Ph	5a	81	82
2 ^[d]	3b	H	F	Me	Me	Ph	5b	84	77
3 ^[d]	3d	-OCH ₂ O-		Me	Me	Ph	5d	84	86
4	3e	H	H	Me	Me	3-Th ^[e]	5e	81	68
5	3f	H	H	Me	Me	<i>c</i> -C ₆ H ₉ ^[f]	5f	71	24
6 ^[d]	3g	H	H	Me	Me	<i>n</i> -Bu	5g	80	20
7 ^[d]	3i	H	H	Me	Me	<i>c</i> -C ₃ H ₅ ^[g]	5i	75	11
8 ^[d]	3j	H	H	Me	Me	<i>c</i> -C ₆ H ₁₁ ^[h]	5j	43 ^[i]	14
9 ^[d]	3k	H	H	Me	Me	SPh	5k	77	5
10	6a	H	H	-(CH ₂) ₄ -		Ph	7a	93	81
11	6b	H	H	-(CH ₂) ₅ -		Ph	7b	96	80(92)

[a] Reactions conducted using 0.3 mmol of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative **3** or **6** in CH₂Cl₂ (0.6 mL) at -30 °C for 3–4 days. [b] Isolated yield. [c] Determined by HPLC analysis, see Supporting Information; in brackets *ee* after recrystallization. [d] Reaction conducted at -20 °C. [e] 3-Thienyl. [f] Cyclohexenyl. [g] Cyclopropyl. [h] Cyclohexyl. [i] 62% conversion.

Like indenes **5** and **7**, [3+3]-tetracyclic compounds **9** exhibit a stereogenic center in their structure and, therefore, we also attempted their enantioselective synthesis. Thus, under the best reaction conditions found,^[43] selected dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes **9** were prepared in good yields although with modest enantiomeric excess (Scheme 11). The significant decrease in the enantioselectivity compared with the analogous indenes could be at least partially explained considering the higher temperatures needed for the formation of the [3+3] adducts, as well as the lack of complete diastereoselectivity in the formation of adducts **8**.



Scheme 11. Enantioselective synthesis of [3+3] adducts **9**.

We also performed the enantioselective alkoxylation of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **3** and **6** (Table 7). The model substrate **3a** cyclizes in the presence of water and primary alcohols affording the corresponding functionalized indenes in high yields and good enantioselectivities (entries 1–4), that can be further improved by

recrystallization, allowing the isolation of the final product even as a single enantiomer when methanol is used as the nucleophile. By using isopropanol as the nucleophile, the isopropoxy derivative **10af** was obtained with the highest *ee*, although as in the racemic reaction the competitive formation of **5a** took place in a small amount. Next, we carried out the alkoxylation of several *o*-alkynylstyrenes in the presence of water or methanol. Again, we obtained the corresponding indenes in good to excellent yields and high enantioselectivities when the substituent of the triple bond was an (hetero)aromatic ring, independently of the substitution in other positions of the substrate (entries 6–13 and 17–18). As expected by the results obtained in the cycloisomerization in the absence of an external nucleophile, non-aromatic alkyne substituted *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes **3g-k** led to lower enantioselectivities (entries 14–16). Unfortunately, all the efforts made to produce 1*H*-indenes **13** bearing an all-carbon quaternary enantioenriched centre at C-1 failed, we observed no reaction at low temperature and very low *ee* (<10%) and moderate yield at room temperature.

It is noteworthy that most of the functionalized indenes that have been synthesized could be isolated as a single enantiomer after recrystallization. Moreover, the absolute configuration of product **10ca** was determined to be *R* by using single crystal X-ray diffraction,^[44] and the rest were assigned by analogy.

Table 7. Enantioselective synthesis of oxygen-functionalized 1*H*-indenes **10** and **11**.^[a]

ent	3,6	R ¹	R ²	R ³	R ⁴	R ⁵	10,11	yield [%] ^[b]	<i>ee</i> [%] ^[c]
1	3a	H	H	Me	Ph	Me	10aa	99	88(>98)
2	3a	H	H	Me	Ph	H	10ab	93	86
3 ^[d]	3a	H	H	Me	Ph	Et	10ac	88	81
4 ^[d]	3a	H	H	Me	Ph	allyl	10ad	94	80
5 ^[d]	3a	H	H	Me	Ph	<i>i</i> -Pr	10af	72 ^[e]	92(98)
6	3b	H	F	Me	Ph	Me	10ba	93	82(>98)
7	3b	H	F	Me	Ph	H	10bb	88	86
8	3c	H	Br	Me	Ph	Me	10ca	95	80(>98)
9	3c	H	Br	Me	Ph	H	10cb	94	80(>98)
10	3d	-OCH ₂ O-		Me	Ph	Me	10da	98	84(>98)
11	3d	-OCH ₂ O-		Me	Ph	H	10db	80	88(>98)
12	3e	H	H	Me	3-Th ^[f]	Me	10ea	90	75(>98)
13	3e	H	H	Me	3-Th ^[f]	H	10eb	91	78(>98)
14	3g	H	H	Me	<i>n</i> -Bu	Me	10ga	88	30
15	3g	H	H	Me	<i>n</i> -Bu	H	10gb	90	28
16	3k	H	H	Me	SPh	Me	10ka	69	4
17	6a	H	H	-(CH ₂) ₄ -	Ph	Me	11aa	87	80
18	6a	H	H	-(CH ₂) ₄ -	Ph	H	11ab	77	84

[a] Reactions conducted using 0.3 mmol of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative **3** or **6**, 30 equiv. of nucleophile, AgOTs as silver salt with ROH and AgSbF₆ with H₂O, in CH₂Cl₂ (1.2 mL) at -30 °C for 2–4 days. [b] Isolated yield. [c] Determined by HPLC analysis, see Supporting Information; in brackets *ee* after recrystallization. [d] Reaction conducted at -20 °C. [e] 12% of **5a** was also formed. [f] 3-Thienyl.

Conclusion

In summary, we have shown that *ortho*-(alkynyl)styrenes are valuable precursors of indene derived compounds by gold-catalyzed

formal 5-endo-dig cycloisomerizations and alkoxy cyclizations. Thus, reactions of *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes disubstituted at the β -position of the styrene moiety selectively afford 1*H*-indene derivatives in high yields whereas substrates bearing a secondary alkyl group at the terminal carbon of the olefin efficiently produce dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes through a formal [3+3] cycloaddition. Moreover, parallel reactions in the presence of oxygen-centered nucleophiles such as water and alcohols provide the corresponding functionalized indene derivatives. These gold-catalyzed alkoxy cyclizations are also observed with *o*-(alkynyl)- α -methylstyrenes which allows the preparation of indenenes bearing an all-carbon quaternary centre at C-1. Notably, the later results implies a critical effect of the alcohol in the outcome of the cycloisomerization by switching the selectivity from a 6-endo to 5-endo cyclization. In addition, we have also accomplished the selective synthesis of polycyclic compounds by a related intramolecular gold-catalyzed alkoxy cyclization of appropriate substituted *o*-(alkynyl)styrenes. Finally, we have developed the asymmetric synthesis of 1*H*-indenenes and dihydrobenzo[*a*]fluorenes using a chiral gold complex derived from electron-rich ligand 3,5-xylyl-MeOBIPHEP. Notably, the enantiomerically-enriched functionalized indenenes are obtained in high yields and with *ee* values up to 92%, that can be improved to >98% after a simple recrystallization.

Experimental Section

Typical procedure for the gold(I)-catalyzed synthesis of 1*H*-indenenes 2 and 8. Synthesis of 2-phenylsulfanyl-1-(prop-1-en-2-yl)-1*H*-indene (5k): AgSbF₆ (5.0 mol%, 8.5 mg) was added to a solution of [AuCl(Ph₃P)] (5.0 mol%, 12.3 mg) in CH₂Cl₂ (1.0 mL) and the reaction mixture was stirred 5–10 minutes. A solution of *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative 3k^[45] (0.5 mmol, 132 mg) in CH₂Cl₂ (1.0 mL) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred at RT until complete disappearance of the styrene derivative was observed by TLC or GC-MS. The mixture was filtered through silica gel, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the crude mixture was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel using hexane as eluent to afford indene 5k (109 mg, 83%) as a yellow oil; *R*_f = 0.28 (hexane); ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ = 1.38 (bs, 3H), 4.23 (bs, 1H), 5.10–5.17 (m, 1H), 6.48–6.50 (m, 1H), 7.05–7.36 (m, 5H), 7.38–7.45 (m, 3H), 7.58–7.67 (m, 2H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.4 MHz, CDCl₃, 25 °C): δ = 16.7 (CH₃), 60.9 (CH), 116.2 (CH₂), 119.6 (CH), 123.1 (CH), 124.5 (CH), 127.2 (CH), 128.2 (CH), 128.8 (C), 129.3 (2 x CH), 133.1 (C), 133.5 (2 x CH), 143.0 (C), 144.1 (C), 145.7 (C), 146.7 (C) ppm; LRMS(EI): *m/z* (%): 265 [(M+1)⁺, 16], 264 (M⁺, 78), 155 (100); HRMS (EI) calcd for C₁₈H₁₆S: 264.0973; found: 264.0968.

General procedure for the gold(I)-catalyzed enantioselective synthesis of 1*H*-indenenes 5, 7 and 10–11: AgSbF₆ (10.0 mol%, 5.1 mg) or AgOTs (10.0 mol%, 8.4 mg) was added to a solution of L*(AuCl)₂ (5.0 mol%, 17.4 mg) in dry CH₂Cl₂ and the reaction mixture was stirred 5–10 minutes and cooled to –30 °C or –20 °C (see Tables 6 and 7 for the suitable Ag salt and temperature for each substrate). The nucleophile (30 equiv., 9 mmol), when appropriate, was added, followed by a solution of the corresponding *o*-(alkynyl)styrene derivative 3 or 6 (0.3 mmol) in dry CH₂Cl₂. The resulting reaction mixture was stirred until complete disappearance of starting material, as monitored by TLC or GC-MS. The mixture was diluted with hexanes and filtered through a pad of silica gel, the solvent was removed and the crude mixture was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel using mixtures of hexane and EtOAc as eluents. The corresponding 1*H*-indenenes 5, 7, 10 or 11 were isolated in the yields and enantioselectivities reported in Tables 6 and 7.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (MINECO) and FEDER (CTQ2010-15358 and CTQ2013-48937-C2-1-P) and Junta de Castilla y León (BU237U13) for financial support. A. M. S. thanks the Junta de Castilla y León (Consejería de Educación) and the Fondo Social Europeo for a PIRTU contract. M.A.R. and P.G.-G. thank MEC for a “Young Foreign Researchers” (SB2009-0186) contract and MINECO for “Juan de la Cierva” contract, respectively.

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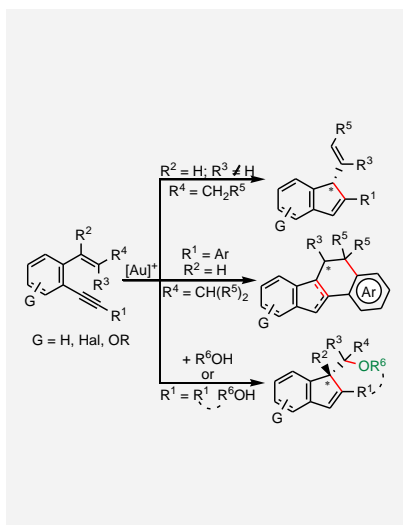
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Cyclization

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Gold(I)-Catalyzed Cycloisomerizations and Alkoxy cyclizations of *ortho*- (Alkynyl)styrenes



A full account for the gold(I)-catalyzed reactions of *ortho*-(alkynyl)styrenes is reported. Selective 5-*endo* cyclizations are achieved by control of substrate olefin substitution patterns, which give rise to a wide variety of interesting 1*H*-indenes. These compounds can be prepared in an enantioselective way by using a chiral gold complex. In the presence of alcohols the corresponding alkoxy cyclization processes take place, even for α -substituted substrates that led to indenes bearing an all-carbon quaternary center at C-1.