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Adams, H., Booth, Y.K., Cook, E.S. et al. (2 more authors) (2017) Reactions of Tetracyclone Molybdenum Complexes with Electrophilic Alkynes: Cyclopentadienone-Alkyne Coupling and Alkyne Coordination. *Organometallics*, 36 (11). pp. 2254-2261. ISSN 0276-7333

<https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.organomet.7b00300>

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**Reactions of Tetracyclone Molybdenum Complexes with Electrophilic Alkynes:
Cyclopentadienone-Alkyne Coupling and Alkyne Coordination**

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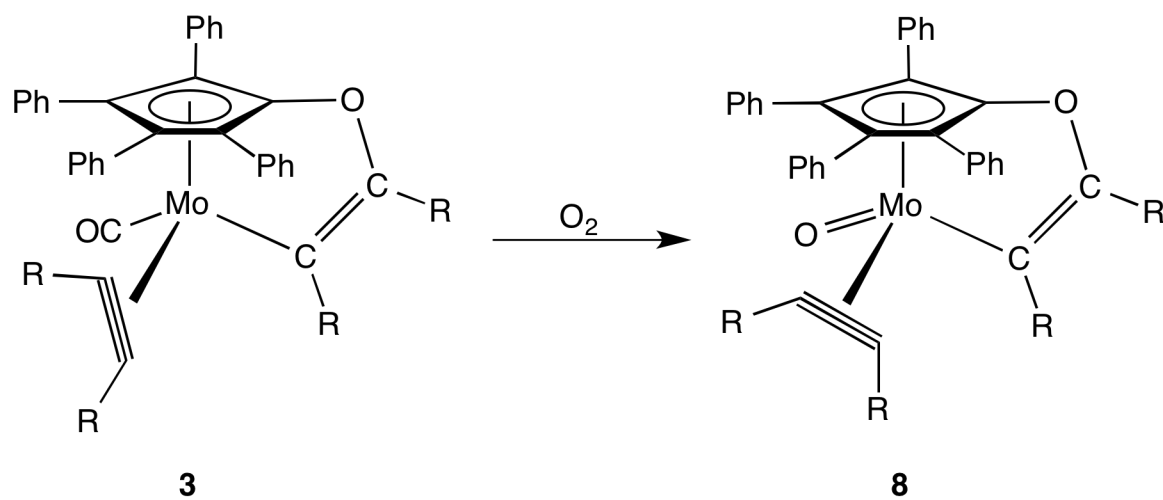
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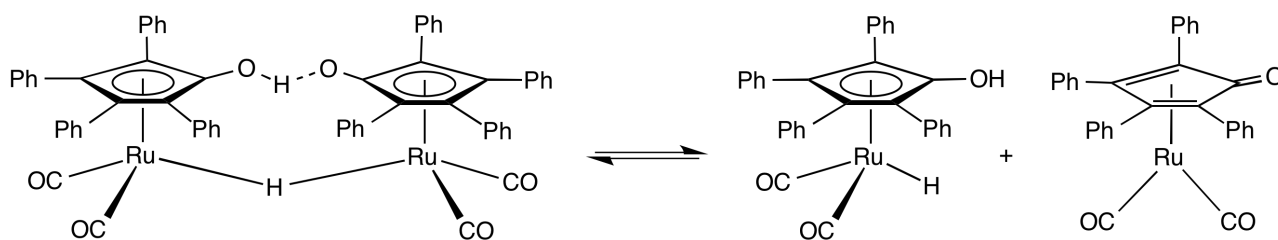


Abstract

The reactions of the complexes $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_2(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})_2]$ and $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_3(\text{NCMe})(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$ with the alkynes dimethyl acetylenedicarboxylate (DMAD, $\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR}$ where $\text{R} = \text{CO}_2\text{Me}$) and methyl propiolate ($\text{RC}\equiv\text{CH}$) have been studied. In the case of DMAD, the initial product is the green carbonyl complex $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCR}=\text{CR})]$ (**3**), in which two alkyne molecules have been incorporated: one is linked to the carbonyl group of the tetracyclone ligand, whereas the other is π -bound to the metal as a 4-electron donor. Oxidation of this compound affords yellow $[\text{Mo}(\text{O})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCR}=\text{CR})]$ (**8**); on replacing the π -acceptor carbonyl ligand by the π -donor oxo group, the alkyne ligand changes orientation: it lies parallel to the Mo–CO bond in **3** but perpendicular to the Mo=O group in **8**. Analogous complexes (**9**, **10**) were isolated in the case of methyl propiolate; each exists as a mixture of two isomers depending on the orientation of the unsymmetrical alkyne ligand.

Introduction

Originally isolated as low yield products from the reactions of metal carbonyls with alkynes,¹ complexes containing cyclopentadienone ligands have attracted a substantial amount of renewed interest in recent years. Among these, ruthenium complexes of tetraphenylcyclopentadienone (commonly referred to as tetracyclone), and in particular Shvo's catalyst, $[\text{Ru}_2(\text{CO})_4(\mu\text{-H})(\mu, \eta^5, \eta^5\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COHOCC}_4\text{Ph}_4)]$, have been demonstrated to be active catalysts for a number of important reactions, such as the transfer hydrogenation of aldehydes, ketones and imines and the dehydrogenation of ammonia-borane.^{2,3} The catalyst functions by reversible dissociation to the interrelated mononuclear fragments $[\text{RuH}(\text{CO})_2(\eta^5\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COH})]$ and $[\text{Ru}(\text{CO})_2(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$ which can act as hydrogenating and dehydrogenating agents respectively (Scheme 1). It is therefore an example of a bifunctional system, in that one hydrogen is delivered from the metal and the other from the hydroxy group of the ligand.⁴ More recently, attempts have been made to replace ruthenium with cheaper, more earth-abundant metals such as iron in catalysts developed by Casey, Beller, Wills and others.⁵



Scheme 1. Formation of catalytically active species by dissociation of Shvo's catalyst.

Some time ago we reported efficient preparations of several molybdenum complexes containing tetracyclone ligands, including $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_2(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})_2]$ **1** and $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_3(\text{NCMe})(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$ **2** (Chart 1) and demonstrated that their reactions with phosphines afforded complexes of the type $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_3\text{L}(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$ ($\text{L} = \text{PPh}_3, \text{PPh}_2\text{Me}, \text{PPh}_2\text{H}$) or $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_2(\text{L}_2)(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$ ($\text{L}_2 = \text{dppe}, \text{dppm}$).⁶ In these reactions one (and only one) of the tetracyclone ligands of **1** could be displaced by a phosphine. Although molybdenum is not traditionally associated with high catalytic activity in hydrogenation reactions, it is interesting to note that Waymouth and co-workers have recently reported that **2** also displays Shvo-type reactivity in transfer hydrogenation reactions.⁷

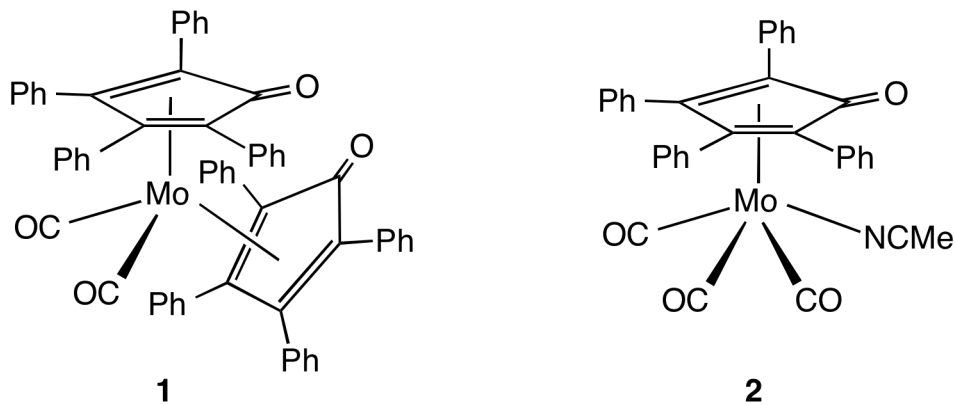


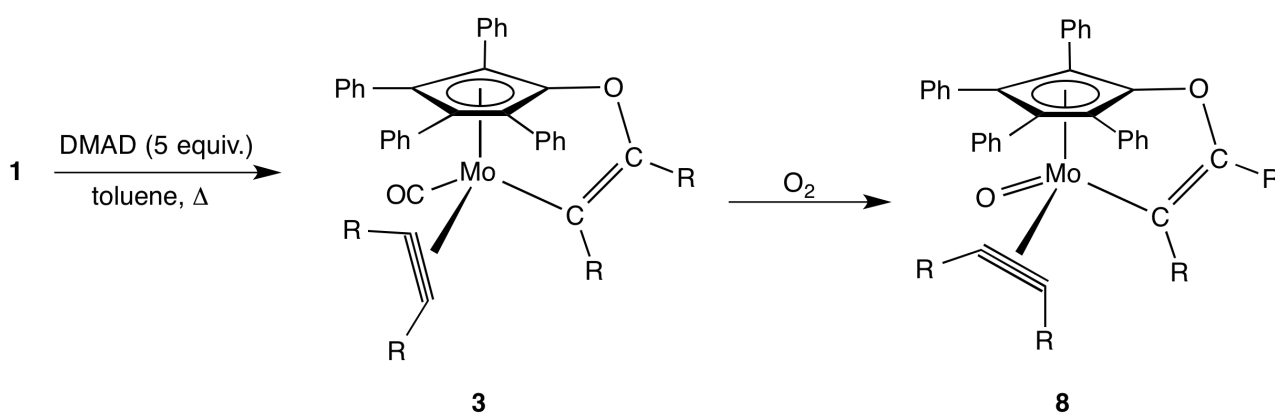
Chart 1

Recently we showed that the reaction of **1** with phenylacetylene resulted in an unusual cyclotrimerisation process to give an η^6 -fulvene ligand.⁸ In this paper we report the reactions of **1** and **2** with the activated alkynes DMAD ($\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR}$; $\text{R} = \text{CO}_2\text{Me}$ throughout this paper) and methyl propiolate ($\text{RC}\equiv\text{CH}$). Part of this work was included in a preliminary publication.⁹

Results and Discussion

Reactions with DMAD

Heating a toluene solution of **1** with an excess of DMAD to reflux for 17 h led to the production of green $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCR}=\text{CR})]$ **3** in 70% yield as the only organometallic product after separation by column chromatography (Scheme 2). The organic by-products included tetracyclone, hexamethyl mellitate from the cyclotrimerisation of DMAD, and dimethyl tetraphenylphthalate formed by the Diels-Alder reaction of the liberated tetracyclone with DMAD. Curiously, in the light of the results obtained below, complex **2** did not give any tractable products when treated with DMAD.



Scheme 2. Synthesis of the DMAD complexes **3** and **8**.

Complex **3** was initially characterized by spectroscopic techniques. The mass spectrum and analytical data established the loss of one tetracyclone ligand and the incorporation of two alkyne molecules. The IR spectrum showed a terminal CO absorption at 2000 cm^{-1} together with weaker peaks at 1735 and 1720 cm^{-1} due to the ester groups. The ^1H NMR spectrum revealed the presence of four inequivalent methyl groups in addition to phenyl peaks due to one tetracyclone ligand. The main point of interest, however, proved to be the $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ NMR spectrum. Two different sets of peaks for the two alkyne moieties were observed: the $\text{C}\equiv\text{C}$ carbons of the first resonate at 193.2 and 190.0 ppm, and those of the second at 161.1 and 155.2 ppm. Assignment of the spectrum in the $140\text{--}200$ ppm region was assisted by recording a ^1H -coupled version; the alkyne carbons and the carbonyl of the cyclopentadienone ring remain as singlets whereas the ester carbonyl groups collapse to quartets due to coupling with the methyl protons. The carbon atoms of the

cyclopentadienone ring also show coupling to the *ortho* hydrogens of their respective phenyl rings (see Supplementary Information).

In our original communication we proposed structure **4**, $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})_2(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$, for the product (Chart 2).⁹ However we later realized that structure **3**, in which one alkyne is linked to the cyclopentadienone ring, is more consistent with the spectroscopic data. For example, it is well established that in Mo(II) complexes the ¹³C chemical shifts of alkyne ligands can be correlated with the number of electrons donated to the metal; typical values are approximately 200 ppm for 4-electron donor alkynes and 115 ppm for 2-electron donors.^{10,11} In structure **4** the two alkyne ligands would be required to donate six electrons in total to the $\text{Mo}(\text{CO})(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})$ unit to achieve an 18-electron configuration, and even though it would be a Mo(0) complex as drawn, the two alkynes would probably be equivalent with an average shift of around 150-180 ppm. The alternative, that one alkyne donates four electrons and the other two, is unlikely, and even then the shift of the latter would be rather high. In structure **3**, however, the peaks at lower field can be readily assigned to the four-electron donor alkyne, whereas the vinylic carbons would be expected to appear at the observed value of *ca.* 150-160 ppm. Secondly, previous work has shown that the Shvo complex $[\text{Ru}_2(\text{CO})_4(\mu\text{-H})(\mu, \eta^5, \eta^5\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COHOCC}_4\text{Ph}_4)]$ reacts with alkynes such as C_2Ph_2 to afford the related vinyl complex $[\text{Ru}(\text{CO})_2(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCPh}=\text{CPh})]$ **5** in which a similar linking of the alkyne to the cyclopentadienone has occurred; moreover the ¹³C chemical shift of the vinylic carbons in these compounds was also around 150 ppm.¹² Further literature precedent for such a structure can be found in the products of the reaction between $[\text{Fe}_2(\text{CO})_9]$ and methyl phenylpropiolate: not only was cyclopentadienone complex **6** isolated, but so was **7**, its addition product with further alkyne.¹³ The nucleophilic nature of the carbonyl oxygen in cyclopentadienone complexes can be attributed to the canonical form shown in Chart 3, in which it bears a negative charge.

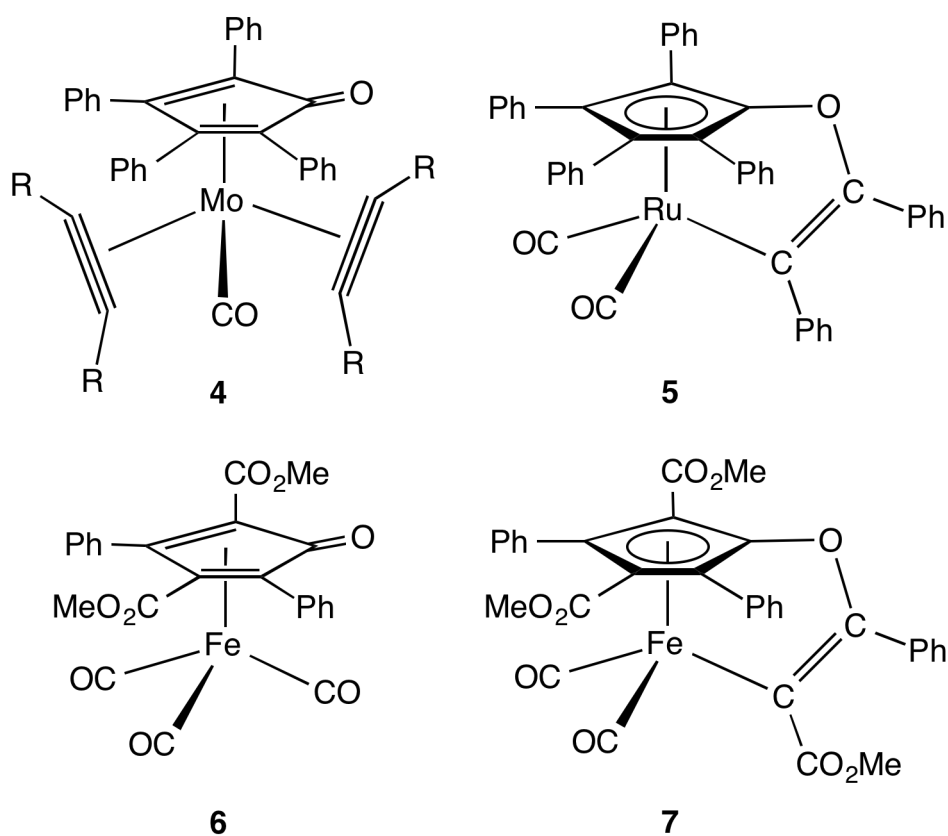


Chart 2

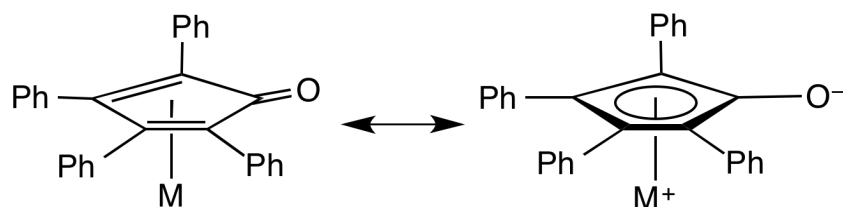


Chart 3

After many years we succeeded in growing crystals of **3** suitable for X-ray diffraction; the structure is shown in Figure 1 with important bond lengths given in its caption. There are two independent molecules in the unit cell, one of which exhibits disorder of the carbonyl oxygen of one of the CO₂Me groups; the molecule depicted here (B) is the non-disordered one. The structure determination confirms the linking of the tetracyclone carbonyl oxygen to one of the alkyne molecules, creating a cyclopentadienyl ligand tethered through the vinyl group. The five-membered ring is bonded to the metal in a slightly tilted η^5 manner: the Mo-C bond lengths lie between 2.302(4) and 2.392(4) Å with those to C(4) and C(5) being shortest. In complex **5**, the ligand was

significantly tilted the opposite way, with the oxygen-bearing carbon being closest to the Ru. The bond lengths in the vinylic portion of the ligand are the same, within experimental error, as those in complex **5**.^{12,14}

The second alkyne is bound to the molybdenum as an η^2 -ligand; the compound therefore belongs to the well established $\text{CpM}(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})\text{LX}$ class.^{15,16} Both the $\text{C}\equiv\text{C}$ bond length of 1.312(6) Å and the $\text{Mo}-\text{C}$ bond lengths [2.031(4) and 2.059(4) Å] are commensurate with this ligand acting as a 4-electron donor, as required by electron counting considerations.¹¹ It is also noteworthy that the alkyne lies parallel to the CO ligand, a point discussed further below.

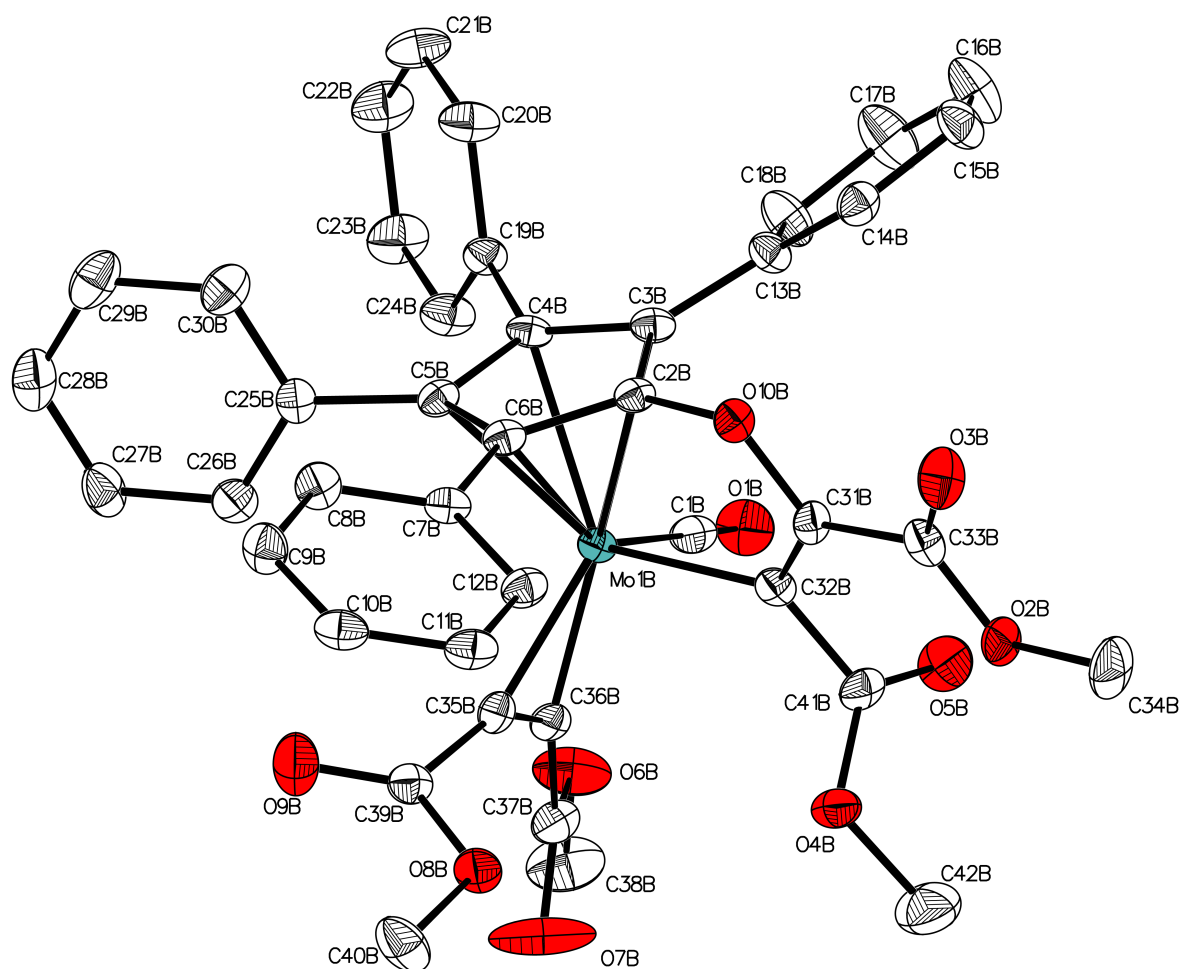


Figure 1. Single crystal X-ray structure of $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCR}=\text{CR})]$ **3**. Selected bond lengths (Å): $\text{Mo}(1\text{B})-\text{C}(1\text{B})$ 2.014(5); $\text{Mo}(1\text{B})-\text{C}(32\text{B})$ 2.151(4); $\text{Mo}(1\text{B})-\text{C}(35\text{B})$ 2.031(4); $\text{Mo}(1\text{B})-\text{C}(36\text{B})$ 2.059(4); $\text{C}(31\text{B})-\text{C}(32\text{B})$ 1.345(6); $\text{C}(35\text{B})-\text{C}(36\text{B})$ 1.312(6); $\text{O}(10\text{B})-\text{C}(2\text{B})$ 1.374(5); $\text{O}(10\text{B})-\text{C}(31\text{B})$ 1.396(5).

Although complex **3** is relatively air stable in the solid state, exposure of a dichloromethane solution to air overnight resulted in a color change from green to yellow accompanied by the disappearance of the carbonyl peak in the IR spectrum. The same transformation can be brought about instantaneously by dissolving the compound in THF that has been deliberately exposed to air and sunlight (the active agent presumably being a peroxide). From the yellow solutions, the corresponding oxo complex $[\text{Mo}(\text{O})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCR}=\text{CR})]$ **8** can be isolated in excellent yield (Scheme 2). The presence of the Mo=O group was confirmed by observation of a peak at 937 cm^{-1} in the solid state IR spectrum. The ^1H NMR spectrum of **8** is very similar to that of **3**, with four inequivalent methyl groups, but distinct differences are apparent in the ^{13}C NMR spectrum, where all four alkyne carbons now appear in the region between 167.2 and 149.7 ppm, *i.e.* there is an upfield shift of approximately 40 ppm in the metal bonded alkyne. We attribute this to the replacement of the π -acceptor carbonyl by the π -donor oxo ligand which can compete with the alkyne ligand for available metal orbitals, as discussed extensively by Templeton and others.¹⁷⁻²⁰ For example, the average chemical shift of the alkyne carbons in $[\text{W}(\text{CO})(\text{HC}\equiv\text{CH})(\text{S}_2\text{CNET}_2)_2]$ is 206 ppm, typical for a four-electron donor alkyne, whereas in the analogous oxo complex $[\text{W}(\text{O})(\text{HC}\equiv\text{CH})(\text{S}_2\text{CNET}_2)_2]$ it is 150 ppm, *i.e.* the alkyne is a much less effective π -donor in the latter.

The X-ray crystal structure of **8** is shown in Figure 2, with important bond lengths detailed in the caption. The Mo=O distance of the terminal oxo ligand is 1.693(5) Å which is typical for Mo(IV) oxo complexes of this type.²¹ Whereas the bonds between Mo and the four former diene carbons C(8) to C(11) are equal within experimental error, that to the oxygen-bearing carbon C(7) is now significantly shorter than in complex **3**. The remaining distances within the vinylic portion of the complex are however unchanged.

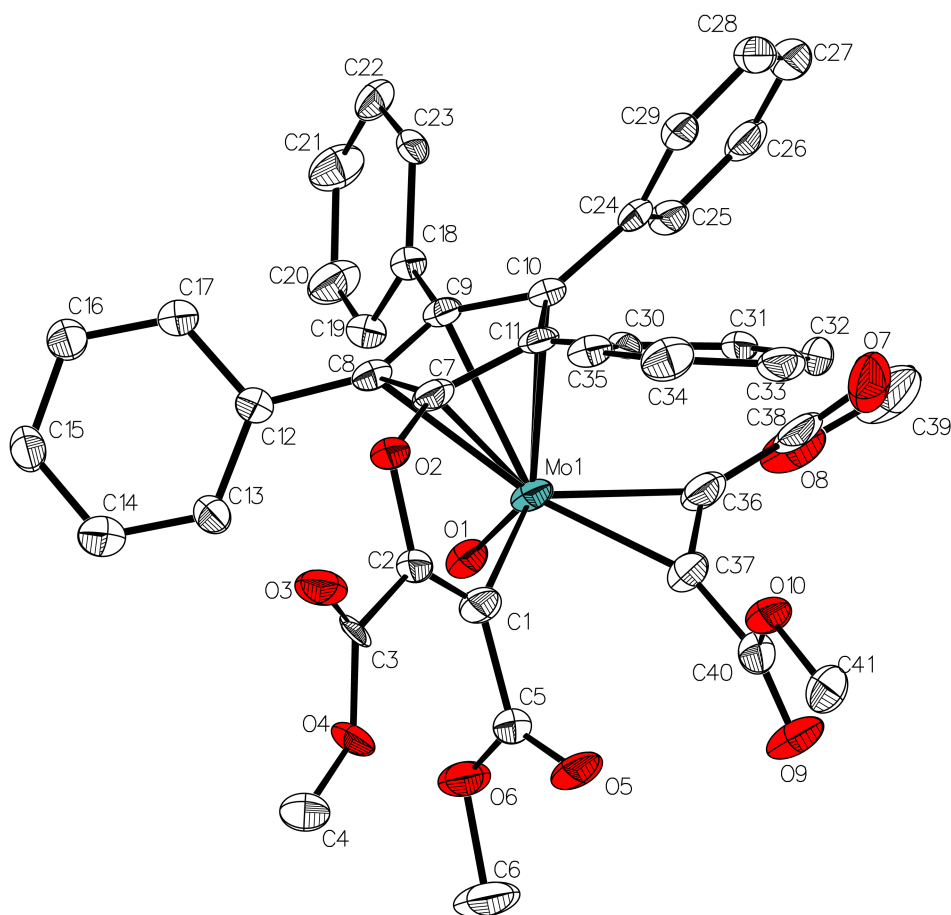


Figure 2. Single crystal X-ray structure of $[\text{Mo}(\text{O})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CR})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCR}=\text{CR})]$ **8**. Selected bond lengths (Å): Mo(1)-O(1) 1.693(5); Mo(1)-C(1) 2.173(8); Mo(1)-C(36) 2.100(8); Mo(1)-C(37) 2.101(7); C(1)-C(2) 1.333(11); C(36)-C(37) 1.293(11); C(2)-O(2) 1.378(8); C(7)-O(2) 1.363(9).

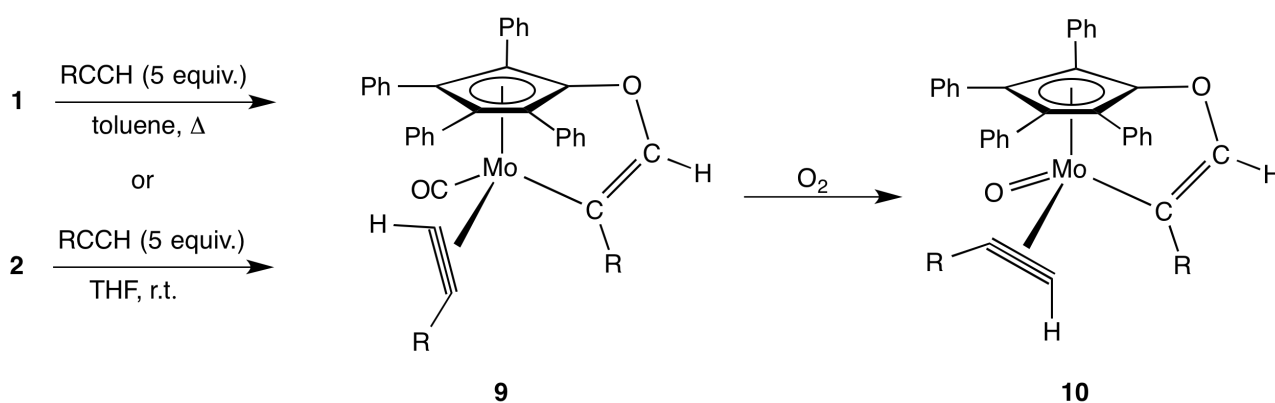
The main structural change concerns the alkyne ligand. The Mo-C distances have increased significantly, in accordance with the idea that the alkyne is less strongly bound in the oxo complex. Although the C≡C bond length might have been expected to decrease, this does not appear to be the case within experimental error [1.312(6) Å in **3** compared to 1.293(11) Å in **8**]. A more obvious difference is the reorientation of the alkyne ligand so that it is now perpendicular to the Mo=O bond *i.e.* it has rotated by 90° compared to its position in the carbonyl complex **3**, due to competition for the available metal *d*-orbitals with the strong π-donor oxo ligand. The same reorientation of the alkyne ligand was shown to have taken place in the X-ray crystal structures of two related complexes, $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})(\text{SC}_6\text{F}_5)(\text{F}_3\text{CC}\equiv\text{CCF}_3)(\eta\text{-C}_5\text{H}_5)]$ and $[\text{Mo}(\text{O})(\text{SC}_6\text{F}_5)(\text{F}_3\text{CC}\equiv\text{CCF}_3)(\eta\text{-C}_5\text{H}_5)]$,²¹ and the alkyne in $[\text{W}(\text{O})(\text{Ph})(\text{PhC}\equiv\text{CPh})(\eta\text{-C}_5\text{H}_5)]$ also adopts the same geometry.²²

Reactions with methyl propiolate

Our initial problems in obtaining crystals for structural characterization from the complexes derived from DMAD prompted us to explore the reactions of **1** and **2** with methyl propiolate, because of the additional information that the CH groups of the alkyne might provide in the ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra, especially since the CH and CR carbons can be readily distinguished in the latter by use of an attached proton test. This indeed proved to be the case, though the results were complicated by the presence of two isomers.

The reaction of complex **1** with an excess of methyl propiolate in refluxing toluene proceeded in a similar way to the DMAD reaction above; a green zone could be separated by chromatography which was shown to contain two isomers of $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CH})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCH}=\text{CR})]$ **9a**, **9b** together with a small amount of the corresponding oxo species $[\text{Mo}(\text{O})(\text{RC}\equiv\text{CH})(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCH}=\text{CR})]$ **10a**, **10b**, which also exists as two isomers (Scheme 3). Also present in the crude material was methyl tetraphenylbenzoate derived from Diels-Alder addition of tetracyclone with methyl propiolate.

In the hope of obtaining a product free from organic contaminants, the reaction of the alkyne with **2**, which contains a labile MeCN ligand, was explored under milder conditions. Stirring a THF solution of **2** with methyl propiolate (5 equiv.) at room temperature for 1 h caused a change from orange to green. Column chromatography gave some free tetracyclone due to decomposition, a small amount of an organometallic by-product, $[\text{Mo}_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})(\text{CO})_5(\mu\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})(\eta\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$, which is presumably formed by the presence of adventitious water²³ and a green zone consisting of **9**. It is not necessary to isolate pure **2** as a starting material; a one-pot synthesis directly from $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_6]$ gave **9** in an improved yield of 76%.



Scheme 3. Synthesis of the methyl propiolate complexes **9** and **10**. The major isomer **9a** is depicted; in the minor isomer **9b** the η^2 -methyl propiolate ligand is rotated by 180° .

There are four possible isomers of complex **9**, depending on the orientation of the alkyne ligand and the regiochemistry of the alkyne-cyclopentadienone linkage, but only two of these are observed, in a ratio of 1.3:1. The ^1H NMR spectrum of the mixture of isomers shows peaks for the CH of the π -bound alkyne ligand at δ 10.86 for the major isomer **9a** and at δ 11.49 for the minor isomer **9b**.²³ The corresponding peaks for the vinylic CH groups appear at δ 7.58 and 7.64 respectively. In the reaction of Shvo's complex with $\text{PhC}\equiv\text{CH}$ to give $[\text{Ru}(\text{CO})_2(\eta^5, \sigma\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{COCPh}=\text{CH})]$ (the analogue of **5**), the ^1H NMR signal for the vinylic proton was observed at 5.81 ppm, on which basis the coupling of the cyclopentadienone oxygen was proposed to occur exclusively to the CPh terminus of the alkyne; only one isomer was present.¹² This shift is far removed from those in **9**, implying the opposite regiochemistry in our case, a deduction confirmed crystallographically.²⁵ Given that the linkage with the tetracyclone ligand is likely to be regiospecific, attacking the CH terminus of the alkyne, we attribute the presence of two isomers to the two possible orientations of the unsymmetrical alkyne ligand. This is clearly confirmed by the ^1H -coupled ^{13}C NMR spectrum: as shown in Fig. 3, the signal due to the CO ligand of the minor isomer exhibits a coupling of 10 Hz to the proton of the alkyne ligand. By analogy with the structure of **3**, we assume that this isomer has the CH terminus located closer to the CO ligand. Interconversion of the two isomers (e.g. by alkyne rotation) was not observed even at elevated temperatures (^1H NMR, 353 K in d^8 -toluene).

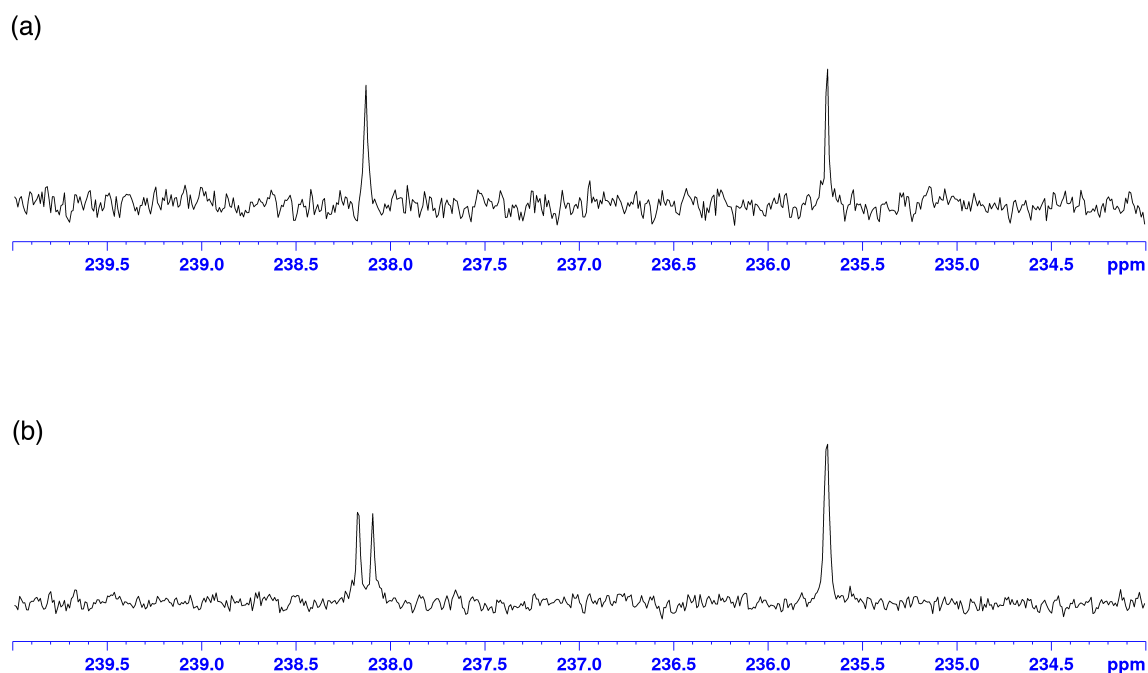


Figure 3. (a) Expansion of $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ spectrum of **9** in the carbonyl region. (b) ^1H -coupled spectrum showing $J(\text{CH})$ of 10 Hz in isomer **9b**.

A combination of attached proton test, ^1H -coupled spectra and 2D-NMR techniques allowed the complete assignment of the ^{13}C NMR spectra of both isomers of **9** (see the Supplementary Information for full details). The alkyne carbons appear at approximately 190 ppm, with the vinylic carbons at about 170 ppm (CH) and 151 ppm (CCO_2Me) respectively (see Table 1 below), consistent again with the alkyne acting as a 4-electron donor.

Exposure of the isomeric mixture of **9** to air results in complete conversion to the corresponding oxo complex **10**, which again exists as two isomers, again in a ratio of 1.3:1.²⁶ The ^1H NMR spectrum of **10** contains peaks at δ 9.00 and 8.22 due to the CH protons of **10a** and at δ 8.80 and 8.20 for its isomer **10b**. The alkyne protons have shifted significantly to higher field compared to those in the carbonyl analogue, consistent with the reduced π -donor capability of the alkyne ligand in the oxo complex, whereas the vinylic protons have moved slightly in the opposite direction, presumably as a consequence of the higher oxidation state of the Mo atom. Detailed examination of the ^{13}C NMR spectrum revealed that the vinylic carbon atoms remain relatively unchanged by the oxidation process, whereas the chemical shifts of the alkyne carbons are reduced by over 40 ppm (Table 1).

Compound	δ of alkyne CH ($^1J(\text{CH})$ in Hz)	δ of alkyne CCO ₂ Me, ($^2J(\text{CH})$ in Hz)	δ of vinylic CH, ($^1J(\text{CH})$ in Hz)	δ of vinylic CCO ₂ Me, ($^2J(\text{CH})$ in Hz)
9a	189.9 (213)	190.2 (9)	170.7 (194)	151.5 (8)
9b	191.2 (224)	190.15 (8)	171.1 (193)	151.6 (8)
10a	143.9 (217)	147.0 (9)	178.6 (192)	155.8 (9)
10b	151.5 (223)	140.0 (12)	177.6 (192)	156.4 (9)

Table 1. ¹³C chemical shifts and C–H coupling constants for the alkyne-derived carbon atoms in complexes **9** and **10**.

Confirmation that the cyclopentadienone oxygen is linked to the CH terminus of the alkyne was obtained from an X-ray crystal structure determination of one isomer of **10** (see Supplementary Information).²⁵ The gross features of the structure are similar to those of complex **8**, with the π -bound methyl propiolate ligand orientated perpendicular to the metal-oxo bond.

Conclusions

In this paper we have shown that the reaction of $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_2(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})_2]$ with electrophilic alkynes results in the incorporation of two alkyne molecules: one of these becomes linked to the oxygen of the cyclopentadienone ligand whereas the other is coordinated to the metal as a 4-electron π -bound ligand. In the case of methyl propiolate the same complex can be prepared from $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_6]$ in a one-pot reaction *via* the acetonitrile complex $[\text{Mo}(\text{CO})_5(\text{NCMe})(\eta^4\text{-C}_4\text{Ph}_4\text{CO})]$. Clearly the coupling of cyclopentadienone ligand and alkyne parallels the reaction of Shvo's complex with alkynes. However the ability of the molybdenum complexes to lose additional ligands (tetracyclone ring and CO in **1**, acetonitrile and CO in **2**) allows the coordination of a second alkyne molecule. Oxidation of the complex leads to the replacement of the Mo–CO group by a Mo=O unit and provides a further example of the reorientation of an alkyne ligand depending on the π -acceptor/ π -donor properties of the co-ligand in two analogous complexes that have both been crystallographically characterized.

Experimental

General experimental techniques were as detailed in other papers from this laboratory.^{6,8,27} Infra-red spectra were recorded in CH₂Cl₂ solution (0.5 mm NaCl cells) over the range 2200-1550 cm⁻¹, as KBr disks or neat with a diamond ATR device over the range 4000-400 cm⁻¹, on a Perkin Elmer Spectrum Two instrument. The ¹H (400 or 500 MHz) and ¹³C (100 MHz or 125.8 MHz) NMR spectra were obtained in CDCl₃ solution (unless otherwise stated) on Bruker Avance AV400 or AV500 machines, the first of these having an automated sample-changer. Chemical shifts are given on the δ scale relative to SiMe₄ = 0.0 ppm. The ¹³C{¹H} NMR spectra were routinely recorded using an attached proton test technique (DEPT pulse sequence). Mass spectra were recorded on a Kratos MS 80 instrument operating in fast atom bombardment mode with 3-nitrobenzyl alcohol as matrix, or on VG AutoSpec instrument operating in electron impact mode, and are given for the most abundant isotope (⁹⁸Mo). Elemental analyses were carried out by the Microanalytical Service of the Department of Chemistry.

Tetracyclone and the complexes [Mo(CO)₂(η⁴-C₄Ph₄CO)₂] and [Mo(CO)₃(NCMe)(η⁴-C₄Ph₄CO)] were prepared by literature procedures.^{6,28} Alkynes were obtained from Aldrich and used as received. Light petroleum refers to the fraction boiling in the range 40-60 °C. THF for oxidation reactions was prepared by allowing a stoppered clear glass flask of the solvent to stand on a sunny windowsill for several weeks. **Warning!** All peroxides should be treated as potentially explosive and under no circumstances should THF treated in this way be subsequently distilled.

Synthesis of [Mo(CO)(RC≡CR)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCR=CR)] 3.

Five equivalents of DMAD (1.0 cm³, 8.15 mmol) were added to a solution of [Mo(CO)₂(η⁴-C₄Ph₄CO)₂] (1.528 g, 1.59 mmol) in toluene (175 cm³). The yellow solution was heated to reflux for 17 hours, changing first to purple then to green-brown. Monitoring by TLC showed that the purple color was due to released tetracyclone. The reaction mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature, a small amount of silica was added and the toluene was removed on the vacuum line. The resulting solid was loaded onto a chromatography column. Elution with a mixture of light petroleum and dichloromethane (1:1) produced a faint yellow band that was not collected, followed by the recovered tetracyclone. Elution with dichloromethane afforded a yellow band of organic material (IR 1741 cm⁻¹), identified as a mixture of dimethyl tetraphenylphthalate (by comparison

with an authentic sample prepared from DMAD and tetracyclone in refluxing toluene)²⁹ and hexamethyl mellitate.³⁰ Elution with a mixture of CH₂Cl₂ and acetone (99:1) separated a small yellow-brown band, and changing to a 95:5 ratio of the same solvents produced the dark green zone due to [Mo(CO)(RC≡CR)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCR=CR)]. Yield = 922.3 mg, 70%. On some occasions an unidentified dark red band could subsequently be eluted with acetone; IR (KBr) 1736 cm⁻¹.

Data for **3**: M.p. 135-138 °C. IR(CH₂Cl₂): 2000, 1735, 1720 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR: δ 7.79-6.49 (m, 20H, Ph), 3.98, 3.62, 3.58, 3.50 (all s, 3H, Me); ¹³C{¹H} NMR: δ 230.4 (CO), 193.2, 190.0 (both CCO₂Me), 170.6, 168.7, 166.6, (all CO₂Me), 161.1 (CCO₂Me) 156.2 (CO₂Me), 155.2 (CCO₂Me), 146.0 (ring CO), 132.6-127.6 (m, Ph), 114.4, 102.8, 101.9, 100.6 (all CPh), 53.3, 52.8, 52.1, 51.7 (all Me). Found: C, 61.02; H, 4.36. Calc. for C₄₂H₃₂O₁₀Mo.0.5CH₂Cl₂: C, 61.11; H, 3.95%. Mass spectrum *m/z* 766 (M-CO)⁺.

Synthesis of [Mo(O)(RC≡CR)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCR=CR)] **8**.

Complex **3** (519.4 mg) was dissolved in 50 cm³ of THF containing peroxides and stirred under argon for 1 h. The solution rapidly changed color from green to yellow. The solvent was removed at room temperature on a rotary evaporator and the residue triturated with light petroleum to remove a small amount of tetracyclone. The yield was virtually quantitative.

Alternatively, dichloromethane (175 cm³) was slowly added to [Mo(CO)(RC≡CR)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCR=CR)] (352.9 mg, 425 μmol) with stirring in air. The solution was then placed under an argon atmosphere and stirred for 18 hours. The products were separated by column chromatography. Elution with a mixture of light petroleum and CH₂Cl₂ (1:1) afforded a small amount of tetracyclone. Elution with a dichloromethane/acetone mixture (99:1) produced a yellow band which yielded [Mo(O)(RC≡CR)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCR=CR)] (213.5 mg, 273.7 μmol, 78%) after removal of the solvent.

Data for **8**: M.p.: darkens above 68 °C, melts at 110-114 °C. IR(CH₂Cl₂): 1772, 1719 cm⁻¹. IR(KBr) 937 cm⁻¹ (Mo=O). ¹H NMR: δ 7.73-6.91 (m, 20H, Ph), 3.77, 3.75, 3.65, 3.58 (all s, 3H, Me); ¹³C{¹H} NMR: δ 170.3, 167.9 (both CO₂Me), 167.2 (CCO₂Me), 165.4, 158.4 (both CO₂Me), 153.5, 150.1, 149.7 (all CCO₂Me) 142.4 (ring CO), 131.9-126.6 (m, Ph), 120.3, 116.0, 114.8, 109.9 (all CPh), 53.0, 52.8, 52.5, 52.2 (all Me). Found: C, 63.07; H, 4.34. Calc. for C₄₁H₃₂O₁₀Mo: C, 63.08; H, 4.10%. Mass spectrum *m/z* 783 (M+H)⁺.

Synthesis of [Mo(CO)(RC≡CH)(η^5 , σ -C₄Ph₄COCH=CR)] **9 from [Mo(CO)₃(NCMe)(η^4 -C₄Ph₄CO)].**

Five equivalents of methyl propiolate (0.7 cm³, 8.25 mmol) were added to a solution of [Mo(CO)₃(NCMe)(η^4 -C₄Ph₄CO)] (1.0102 g, 1.65 mmol) in THF (175 cm³). The resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature with periodic TLC monitoring. After 1 h the product mixture was absorbed onto silica and chromatographed. Tetracyclone (0.1568 g) was eluted with a mixture of light petroleum and CH₂Cl₂ (1:1). Use of a 1:3 mixture of the same solvents caused the elution of a small orange band identified as [Mo₂(H₂O)(CO)₅(μ - η^5 , σ -C₄Ph₄CO)(η^4 -C₄Ph₄CO)] (48.4 mg, 0.043 mmol, 5.2%). The green band of [Mo(CO)(RC≡CH)(η^5 , σ -C₄Ph₄COCH=CR)] (402 mg, 36%) was eluted with CH₂Cl₂ and recrystallized by diffusion from toluene and diethyl ether. The product consists of an inseparable mixture of the two isomers of **9**.

In a separate experiment the synthesis was conducted as a one-pot procedure. Distilled acetonitrile (200 cm³) was added to [Mo(CO)₆] (5.0 g, 18.9 mmol). The solution was stirred and heated to reflux for 4.75 h. The solvent was removed *in vacuo* and the resulting yellow-green [Me(CO)₃(MeCN)₃] was redissolved in THF. Tetracyclone (7.5 g, 19.5 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred overnight. Methyl propiolate (8.6 cm³, 94.5 mmol) was then added and stirring was continued for a further 3 h. Column chromatography as above afforded orange [Mo₂(H₂O)(CO)₅((μ - η^5 , σ -C₄Ph₄CO)(η^4 -C₄Ph₄CO)] (430 mg, 0.385 mmol, 4%) and a green band (9.7 g). Crystallisation by diffusion of light petroleum into a chloroform solution produced a blue solid which consists of a 1.3:1 mixture of isomers **9a** and **9b**, and which dissolves to give a blue-green solution.

M.p. 190-192 °C. IR(CH₂Cl₂): 1963, 1728, 1716, 1688, 1602 cm⁻¹. Mass spectrum *m/z* 689 (M⁺). Found: C, 67.27; H, 4.18; Calc. for C₃₈H₂₈O₆Mo: C, 67.46; H, 4.14%.

Isomer **9a** (major): ¹H NMR δ 10.83 (s, 1H, CH), 7.57 (s, 1H, CH), 7.80-6.30 (m, 20H, Ph), 4.05, 3.40 (both s, 3H, CO₂Me); ¹³C{¹H} NMR: δ 235.7 (CO), 190.2 (CCO₂Me), 189.9 (CH), 170.7 (CH), 170.2 (CO₂Me), 169.7 (CO₂Me), 151.5 (CCO₂Me), 139.0 (ring CO), 133.1-127.7 (m, Ph), 112.4, 102.9, 98.9, 96.5 (all CPh), 52.9, 51.5 (both Me).

Isomer **9b** (minor): ¹H NMR: δ 11.48 (s, 1H, CH), 7.63 (s, 1H, CH), 7.80-6.30 (m, 20H, Ph), 3.57, 3.42 (both s, 3H, CO₂Me); ¹³C{¹H} NMR: δ 238.1 (CO), 191.2 (CH), 190.15 (CCO₂Me),

171.4 (CO₂Me), 171.1 (CH), 169.55 (CO₂Me), 151.6 (CCO₂Me), 136.7 (ring CO), 133.1-127.7 (m, Ph), 112.9, 101.2, 100.9, 99.7 (all CPh), 52.3, 51.5 (both Me).

Synthesis of [Mo(CO)(RC≡CH)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCH=CR)] **9 from [Mo(CO)₂(η⁴-C₄Ph₄CO)₂].**

Five equivalents of methyl propiolate (1.5 cm³, 16.4 mmol) were added to a solution of [Mo(CO)₂(η⁴-C₄Ph₄CO)₂] (3.02 g, 3.28 mmol) in toluene (175 cm³) and the reaction mixture was refluxed for 17 h with TLC monitoring. The solution was then absorbed onto a small amount of silica and chromatographed. A mixture of light petroleum and CH₂Cl₂ (1:1) eluted tetracyclone followed by two narrow yellow bands consisting of organic by-products which were not collected. A green band (1.47 g) was then eluted with CH₂Cl₂. The ¹H NMR spectrum showed it to consist of a mixture of the complexes **9a** and **9b**, with small amounts of **10a**, **10b**, and methyl-2, 3, 4, 5-tetraphenylbenzoate [¹H NMR δ 7.95 (s, 1H, CH), 7.34-6.75 (m, 20H, Ph), 3.62 (s, 3H, CO₂Me)].

Synthesis of [Mo(O)(HC≡CR)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCH=CR)] **10**

An isomeric mixture of **9a** and **9b** from the above experiments (103.9 mg, 0.154 mmol) was dissolved in toluene (175 cm³). The solution was briefly exposed to air by removing a stopper of the flask, and then reconnected to the argon supply and stirred for 18 h with TLC monitoring. Column chromatography gave tetracyclone, eluted with a mixture of light petroleum and CH₂Cl₂ (2:5) followed by the yellow product [Mo(O)(HC≡CR)(η⁵, σ-C₄Ph₄COCH=CR)] which was eluted with CH₂Cl₂ and recrystallized from ethyl acetate and diethyl ether. Yield: 73.2 mg, 0.110 mmol, 73%.

Alternatively, **9** (303.6 mg, 0.44 mmol) was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (10 cm³) and THF containing peroxides (5 cm³) was added.³¹ The solution was stirred for 15 min, during which it changed from green to yellow. After addition of silica (5 g) the solvent was removed and the residue chromatographed. A mixture of light petroleum and CH₂Cl₂ (1:1) eluted a small amount of tetracyclone, and elution with CH₂Cl₂ and acetone (19:1) gave a yellow band of product. The solvent was rotary evaporated to leave an oil, which was dissolved in diethyl ether. Addition of light petroleum precipitated the product as a yellow solid.

IR(CH₂Cl₂): 1772, 1730, 1603 cm⁻¹. IR(KBr) 936 cm⁻¹ (Mo=O). Mass spectrum *m/z* 665 (M⁺). Found: C, 63.71; H, 4.39. Calc. for C₃₇H₂₈O₆Mo.0.5CH₂Cl₂: C, 63.69; H, 4.10%.

Isomer **10a** (major): ¹H NMR: δ 9.02 (s, 1H, CH), 8.23 (s, 1H, CH); 7.80-6.60 (m, 20H, Ph), 3.64, 3.62 (both s, 3H, Me); ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CD₂Cl₂): δ 178.6 (CH), 170.05, 169.7 (CO₂Me), 155.8 (CCO₂Me), 147.0 (CCO₂Me), 143.9 (CH), 139.9 (ring CO), 132.1-126.7 (m, Ph), 119.3, 114.0, 112.1, 108.8 (all CPh), 51.9, 51.6 (both Me).

Isomer **10b** (minor): ¹H NMR δ 8.83 (s, 1H, CH), 8.22 (s, 1H, CH), 7.80-6.30 (m, 20H, Ph), 3.70, 3.65 (both s, 3H, Me). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CD₂Cl₂): δ 177.6 (CH), 170.1, 170.0 (CO₂Me), 156.4 (CCO₂Me), 151.5 (CH), 140.0 (CCO₂Me), 139.4 (ring CO), 132.1-126.7 (m, Ph), 121.2, 113.2, 112.4, 110.1 (all CPh), 52.7, 51.7 (both Me).

Associated content

Supporting information

¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra of all compounds and full assignment of ¹³C spectra with comparison between decoupled/coupled spectra, with tables of crystal data for complexes **3**, **8** and **10**.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

Acknowledgements

We thank the University of Manchester (1987-88) and the University of Sheffield (1988-2017) for support, Dr. Sandra van Meurs for assistance in recording the ¹³C and variable temperature ¹H NMR spectra, and Dr. Craig Robertson for assistance with the crystal structure determination of complex **8**.

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