

Organic Synthesis with α -Diazocarbonyl Compounds

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I. Introduction

α -Diazocarbonyl compounds have a long history of useful applications in organic chemistry. They are easily prepared from readily accessible precursors and can be induced to undergo a wide variety of chemical transformations under very mild conditions. Although our primary purpose in writing this review is to demonstrate the ongoing utility of α -diazocarbonyl compounds in modern organic synthesis, it is appropriate by way of introduction to summarize briefly the more important methods of preparation, drawing attention to recent improvements in experimental procedures.¹

II. Synthesis of α -Diazocarbonyl Compounds

The first recorded synthesis of an α -diazocarbonyl compound dates back to the work of Curtius² on diazotization of natural α -amino acids (ethyl diazoacetate was first synthesized in 1883 from glycine) and although Wolff discovered in 1912 the diazocarbonyl rearrangement which now bears his name, simple diazocarbonyl compounds only became readily available in the late 1920s with the discovery by Arndt and Eistert³⁻⁵ and by Bradley and Robinson⁶ that the key to successful acylation of diazomethane with an acid chloride, a reaction previously believed capable of furnishing chloromethyl ketone only, lies in the use of diazomethane in sufficient excess to sequester the hydrogen chloride liberated and thereby prevents its addition to the diazo ketone. Acylation of diazomethane remains the single most important route to acyclic terminal α -diazo ketones. The diazo group transfer technique, which is now available for both terminal and nonterminal systems, also occupies an important place in diazocarbonyl methodology.



Tao Ye was born in Huang Shan city (P. R. China) in 1963. He received his B.Sc. (1983) and M.Sc. degrees (1986) from East China University of Chemical Technology, the latter with the late Professor Gong Wong. In 1986 he joined the faculty at East China University of Chemical Technology for teaching/research work and was promoted to the rank of lecturer in 1988. In 1989 he resigned the lecturership and went to Ireland to join Professor M. A. McKervey's research group, initially at University College Cork and later at the Queen's University of Belfast. He obtained his Ph.D. (1993) in organic chemistry from Queen's University with a thesis entitled "Catalytic Asymmetric Synthesis Using Diazocarbonyl Intermediates". His current research interests include the development of new synthetic methods particularly related to enantioselectivity and synthesis of biologically significant compounds. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow with Professor M. A. McKervey and will join Professor G. Pattenden's research group (University of Nottingham) in June 1994.

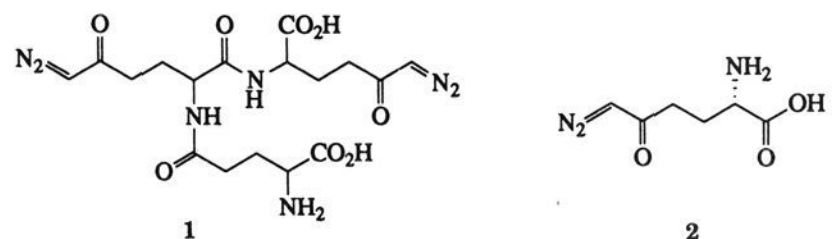


Professor M. A. McKervey was born in Co. Fermanagh, N. Ireland, in 1938. He received his B.Sc. (1961) and Ph.D. degrees (1964) from Queen's University, Belfast, where his research supervisor was Professor H. B. Henbest. Following a period at M.I.T. where he was postdoctoral fellow with the late Professor A. C. Cope and assistant professor, he returned to Queen's to a lecturership and, in 1973, a readership. In 1976 Professor M. A. McKervey was appointed to the Chair of Organic Chemistry in University College Cork, Republic of Ireland. He returned to Queen's in 1990 as professor of Organic Chemistry and Head of the Research Division of the School of Chemistry. He has authored or coauthored over 200 research publications and current research interests includes the synthetic chemistry of diazocarbonyl compounds, amino acids and furans, and the construction of novel ionophores using chemically modified calixarenes.

A. Acylation of Diazoalkanes

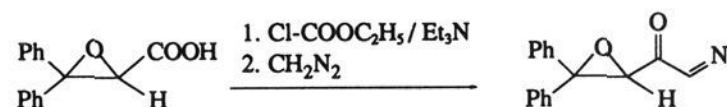
The Arndt-Eistert synthesis of diazo ketones involves addition of an acyl chloride to ethereal diazomethane (at least 1–2 equiv excess) at or below 0 °C; extensive purification of the product is usually unnecessary. Pettit and Nelson⁷ have designed an apparatus for diazo ketone preparation in which the carboxylic acid in ether

in one compartment is first treated with oxalyl chloride, triethylamine, and a catalytic amount of dimethylformamide to furnish the acyl chloride. The resulting solution is then filtered into ethereal diazomethane at –78 °C. This technique was developed for the synthesis of the anticancer bis diazoketone, azotomycin (1).⁷ The antibiotic 6-diazo-5-oxo-L-norleucine (2), commonly known as DON, has been synthesized several times^{8,9} from the N-protected acyl chloride and diazomethane, albeit in very low (0.5–1.0%) overall yields. Much of the inefficiency appears to be associated with the formation of the acyl chloride for which the most useful method is the reaction of the dicyclohexyl ammonium salt of N-(trifluoroacetyl)glutamic acid with oxalyl chloride.¹⁰



Anhydrides are also suitable acylating agents for diazomethane.^{11,12} A convenient procedure involves treatment of the carboxylic acid with dicyclohexylcarbodiimide to form the anhydride which is then allowed to react with ethereal diazomethane.¹³ A convenient *in situ* procedure to form mixed anhydrides is now available involving anhydride formation between the carboxylic acid and a chloroformate, followed by treatment with diazomethane. For example, 3-(diazocetyl)-2,2-diphenyloxirane has been synthesized by this route (Scheme 1).^{14,15} This route has also been

Scheme 1



applied to the production of homochiral α -diazoketones from N-protected amino-acids, proline, and phenylalanine furnishing diazo ketone 3 and 4, respectively.¹⁶

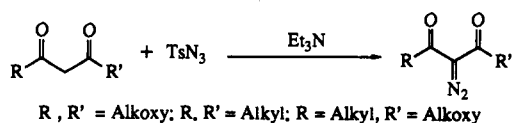


Acylation of higher diazoalkanes with acyl chlorides and anhydrides is also possible, although less efficiently than with diazomethane. Numerous synthetic intermediates containing the diazoethyl group have been obtained in this way.¹⁷

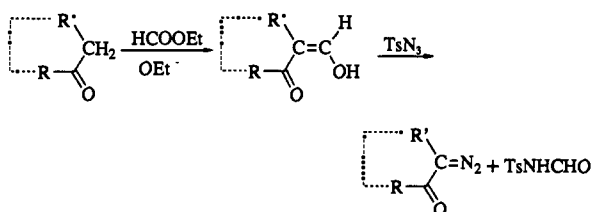
B. Diazo-Transfer Reactions

An obvious limitation of diazoalkane acylation is that it is not applicable to cyclic α -diazoketones. Although many routes to cyclic diazo ketones have been developed, none competes in usefulness with the diazo-transfer technique introduced by Regitz and his collaborators^{18,19} in 1967. Diazo transfer is now the standard route, not only to cyclic α -diazoketones, but to many acyclic systems not accessible by acyl-transfer processes. In the broadest sense, diazo transfer refers to the transfer of a complete diazo group from a donor

Scheme 2



Scheme 3



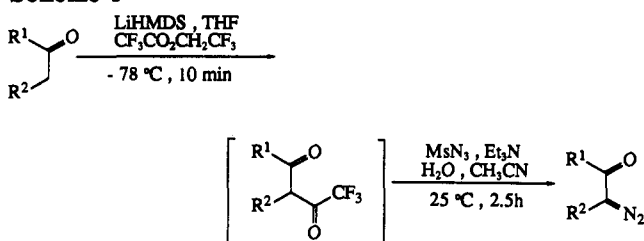
to an acceptor, which for α -diazocarbonyl products must therefore be an acid or ketone derivative. The diazo donor is invariably a sulfonyl azide.¹⁹

Diazo transfer to the α -methylene position of a carbonyl compound requires the presence of a base of sufficient strength to deprotonate the substrate. Prior activation of the substrate may be necessary. Substrates can therefore be divided into two broad categories on the basis of their acidity: those in which the α -methylene position is already sufficiently reactive toward diazo transfer, and those which require prior activation to ensure smooth transfer in the presence of a mild base.^{20,21} Of greatest importance in the former groups are malonic esters, β -keto esters, and β -diketones which are readily converted into 2-diazo-1,3-dicarbonyl products by the standard Regitz procedure of exposure to tosyl azide in dry chloroform or ethanol using triethylamine as the base (Scheme 2).

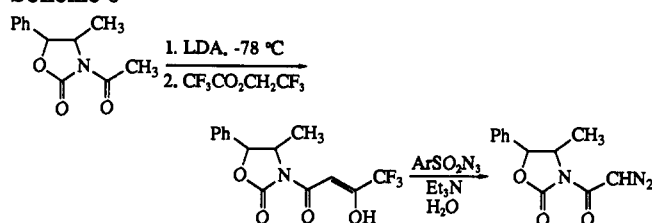
Almost all of the β -lactam intermediates bearing diazocarbonyl side chains to be discussed in a later section of this review were obtained in this way. While the diazo-transfer reaction works extremely well for cases in which the reaction site is activated by two flanking carbonyl functions, the standard Regitz procedure usually fails in cases where the methylene group is activated by a single carbonyl group only. Although satisfactory results can sometimes be achieved with single carbonyl compounds by optimizing the system of base and diazo-transfer reagent (*vide infra*), in general, however, best results are usually obtained by activation in the form of acyl aldehydes prior to diazo transfer. This technique, often referred to as deformylating diazo transfer, has found widespread application since its introduction in 1967.^{18,19} It involves Claisen condensation of the ketone with ethyl formate in order to introduce the strongly activating formyl group which is subsequently released as the sulfonamide in the course of the actual diazo transfer; either the metal salt or the neutral formyl compound can be employed as the activated intermediate (Scheme 3).

Variations in the groups R and R' allow most types of acyclic and cyclic α -diazo ketones to be synthesized in this way.¹⁸⁻²² Recently, Danheiser and co-workers²³ found that deformylating diazo transfer in a number of crucial cases produced the desired α -diazo ketones in relatively low yield. Particularly problematic were reactions involving base-sensitive substrates such as α,β -enones where the difficulties were attributable in part to the harsh conditions typically required for the Claisen condensation step. By substituting the tri-

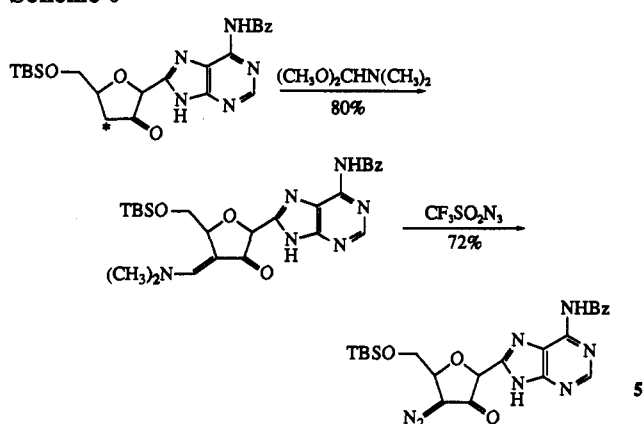
Scheme 4



Scheme 5



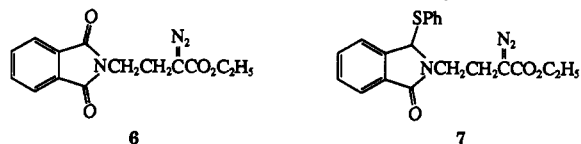
Scheme 6



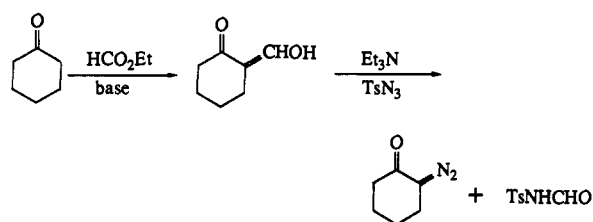
fluoroacetylation of kinetically generated lithium enolates for the usual Claisen formylation step, Danheiser found that the efficiency of the diazo-transfer reaction can be improved, in some cases quite dramatically. A key feature of the new protocol (Scheme 4) is the activation of the ketone precursor as the corresponding α -trifluoroacetyl derivative, the reaction of the ketone enolate with trifluoroethyl trifluoroacetate taking place essentially instantaneously at -78 °C. Doyle²⁴ has employed a similar strategy (Scheme 5) to achieve diazo transfer to a base sensitive *N*-acyloxazolidinone derivative.

Norbeck and Kramer,²⁵ seeking to employ diazo ketone 5 in their synthesis of (-)-oxetanocin, activated the appropriate starred (*) carbon to give the enamino ketone and then used triflyl azide as diazo-transfer reagent (Scheme 6).

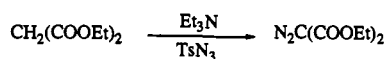
Diazo ester compounds can be synthesized by treating the ester anion with ethyl formate so as to produce the doubly activated species. Reaction of this formyl compound with the appropriate diazo-transfer reagent then occurs, proceeding to the diazo ester by a subsequent cleavage of the formyl group. For example, compounds 6²⁶ and 7²⁷ were prepared by this method.



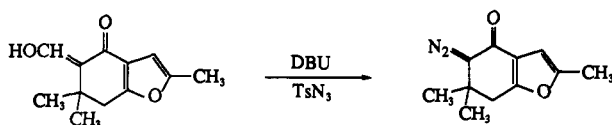
Scheme 7



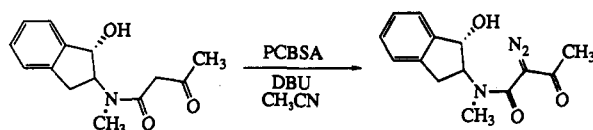
Scheme 8



Scheme 9



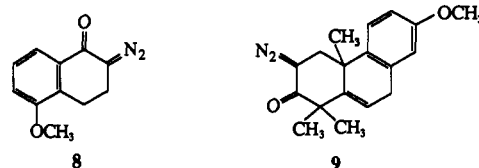
Scheme 10



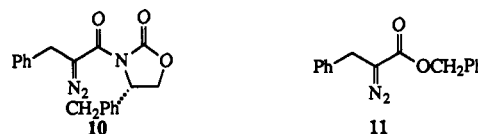
Two examples, representative of cyclic and acyclic diazo transfer, in which tosyl azide was the transfer agent and triethylamine the base are shown in Schemes 7²⁸ and 8.²⁹ In cases where triethylamine is insufficiently basic to cause complete deprotonation of β -dicarbonyl compounds, Koskinen and Muñoz³⁰ have advocated the use of potassium carbonate in acetonitrile under which conditions practically quantitative diazo transfer from tosyl azide to a range of β -keto esters was complete in 1 h at room temperature, the workup simply consisting of filtration of the inorganic salts and the sulfonamide byproduct after addition of diethyl ether. Problems associated with hydrolysis of base-sensitive methyl acetoacetate were not encountered.³¹ Benalloum and Villemain³² have reported a convenient synthesis of diazocarbonyl compounds from tosyl azide and carbonyl compounds with $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{-KF}$ as a solid base and Nikolaev and co-workers³³ have used a potassium fluoride-crown ether combination as the base system in the diazo-transfer reaction of cyclic and acyclic diketone compounds. The successful use of potassium fluoride in this reaction is apparently due to the facile deprotonation of diketones by the "naked" anion of fluorine, even in the case of sterically hindered compounds. Rao and Nagarajan have successfully used 1,8-diazobicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene (DBU)³⁴ for smooth diazo transfer, notably in the case of hindered compounds where the standard diazo-transfer conditions were inefficient, e.g. as in Scheme 9. Actually, for acetoacetamide precursors, diazo transfer with *p*-carboxybenzenesulfonyl azide (PCBSA) and triethylamine in acetonitrile proved unsuccessful. However, when DBU was used, the reaction was complete in a few hours (Scheme 10).³⁵

An application of phase-transfer catalysis to the diazo-transfer process using an aqueous base has been devised by Ledon.³⁶ When diazo transfer is complete, the organic layer contains only the diazo compound and traces of the ammonium salt. The latter is eliminated during distillation or by rapid filtration through a silica gel column. Mander and Lombardo³⁷ have found that

when 2,4,6-triisopropylbenzenesulfonyl azide is substituted for tosyl azide some unactivated cyclic ketones can be converted into α -diazo derivatives under phase-transfer conditions employing potassium hydroxide, 18-crown-6, and tetrabutylammonium bromide. Two compounds prepared via this modification are shown below in 8 and 9. The limitation of this method is that it is not suitable for substrates sensitive to aqueous basic hydrolysis, e.g. methyl esters.

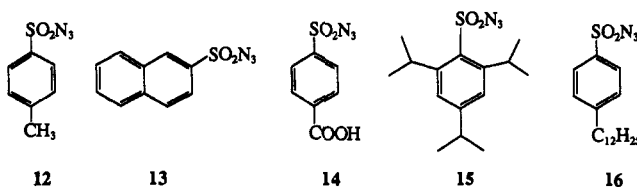


By employing a stronger base as deprotonation reagent, direct diazo transfer to *N*-acyloxazolidinones and esters is also successful. The competing azidation reaction in these direct diazo-transfer systems can be reduced by choosing appropriate sulfonyl azides.³⁸ Thus highly electron deficient *p*-nitrobenzenesulfonyl azide (PNBSA) resulted in predominant formation of the diazo-transfer product, whereas the sterically demanding 2,4,6-triisopropylbenzenesulfonyl azide affords maximum yields of the azide-transfer product. These observations contrast with Mander and Lombardo's precedent.³⁷ The mechanism of direct diazo transfer was also studied by Evans and co-workers.³⁸ Two examples of products obtained via the direct diazo transfer to acyloxazolidinones and ester are shown in 10 and 11:



Some benzyl ketones can be converted to α -diazo ketones directly by this technique provided that a potassium alkoxide is employed as the base.^{39,40} However, when DBU is employed as base, this type of transformation is also successful.⁴¹

Although tosyl azide is by far the most frequently employed diazo donor and was first used in this capacity by Doering and DePuy in 1953 in their synthesis of diazocyclopentadiene,⁴² workers in the Merck Laboratories⁴³ have raised doubts regarding safety aspects of this reagent. In the first place, the *Organic Syntheses*⁴⁴ preparation of tosyl azide calls for the use of ethanol as the reaction solvent. But as Curphey⁴⁵ has pointed out, ethanol is an inappropriate solvent for the reaction of tosyl chloride with sodium azide; replacement with acetone gives a cleaner product not requiring recrystallization. The Merck chemists,⁴³ faced with the need to develop a large scale diazo transfer in their synthesis of thienamycin (*vide infra*), examined the five reagents 12–16 from the standpoint of utility,



thermal stability, ease of handling, safety, and cost. In addition to desired performance, the specific heat of decomposition, thermal decomposition temperature, relative rates of decomposition, and impact sensitivity of all five compounds were measured. Tosyl azide **12** was found to be the most hazardous, combining the highest impact sensitivity with the lowest initiation temperature and the largest heat of decomposition. In fact, pure tosyl azide is classified officially as an explosive under German law. Some serious accidents with tosyl azide have been reported.^{46,47} Although *p*-carboxylbenzenesulfonyl azide (**14**) had the highest initiation temperature, this reagent is expensive and its use necessitates 2 mol of base per mole of substrate which is not ideal for base sensitive substrates; the carboxyl group, however, does offer a chemical handle for removal from neutral products. *p*-Dodecylbenzenesulfonyl azide (**16**), which was actually an isomeric mixture within the alkyl side chain, exhibited the lowest specific heat of decomposition and no impact sensitivity at the highest test level, making it the safest reagent of the group. Moreover, byproduct dodecylbenzenesulfonamides are noncrystalline, facilitating isolation of crystalline diazo ketones. If, on the other hand, the diazo product is a liquid, naphthalene-2-sulfonyl azide (**13**) can be employed to take advantage of the fact that the sulfonamide byproduct is sparingly soluble. Hazen et al.⁴³ successfully employed this diazo-transfer reagent in the synthesis of ethyl 2-diazo-3-oxobutanoate.

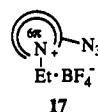
Polymer-bound sulfonyl azide⁴⁶ has also been employed as diazo-transfer agent to a variety of 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds. Advantages of its use include better safety in handling plus the convenience of a cleaner workup, the sulfonamide byproduct remaining attached to the insoluble polymer.

Recently, Taber and his collaborators⁴⁹ claimed that methanesulfonyl (mesyl) azide is a generally superior reagent to tosyl azide for diazo transfer; its main advantage being the greater ease with which the sulfonamide byproduct is removed from the reaction mixture by washing with 10% aqueous NaOH solution. However, stability data for mesyl azide have not been reported and great caution should attend its use. Davies and his collaborators⁵⁰ claimed that *p*-acetamidobenzenesulfonyl azide is a practical and cost-effective reagent for use in diazo-transfer reactions. They also give the stability data and the general applicability of this reagent. By using this diazo-transfer reagent in the synthesis of α,β -unsaturated diazo esters, the resulting yields are generally good.⁵⁰⁻⁵² Nikolaev and co-workers³³ have reported the use of *p*-nitrobenzenesulfonyl azide instead of tosyl azide. The low solubility of both the starting azide and the *p*-nitrobenzenesulfonyl amide produced, and the significantly higher absorption ability of these compounds on silica gel simplifies the purification of the corresponding diazo ketone.

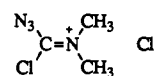
More recently McGuinness and Shechter⁵³ have reported that azidotris(diethylamino)phosphonium bromide is an exceptionally safe diazo-transfer reagent, which is stable to shock, friction, and rapid heating. Also the diazo-transfer reaction generates a neutral leaving group, hexaethylphosphoramidic triamide, which is easily removed as its hydrobromide salt.

Although we have briefly reviewed several reagents for diazo transfer reactions, it should be noted that other azide reagents are available which in some applications have advantages with respect to safety, economy, and the facility of product separation.⁵⁴

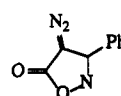
The preparative scope of the diazo group transfer reaction is considerably widened by using azidinium salts as diazo group donors. Balli and collaborators⁵⁵⁻⁵⁷ described the use of stable heterocyclic azidinium salts **17** as the diazo-transfer reagent in a pH 0-8 range. This procedure was fairly successful with a variety of active methylene compounds. Kokel and Viehe⁵⁸ showed that the iminium salt **18** was also an effective diazo-transfer reagent in acidic medium. Since the reaction proceeds only in the neutral and acid ranges in which sulfonyl azides are unreactive, it is particularly suitable for diazo compounds that undergo coupling. Two compounds prepared by this method are shown: **19** and **20**.⁵⁶ The applicability of diazo group transfer using azidinium salts is limited by the fact that the reaction must be carried out in acidic to neutral medium. The procedure is no longer applicable when the active methylene component does not form an anion under the above conditions, or when the diazo compound is unstable to acid.^{18,19}



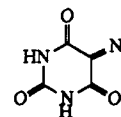
17



18



19

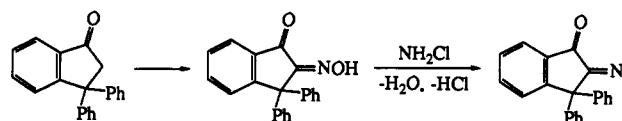


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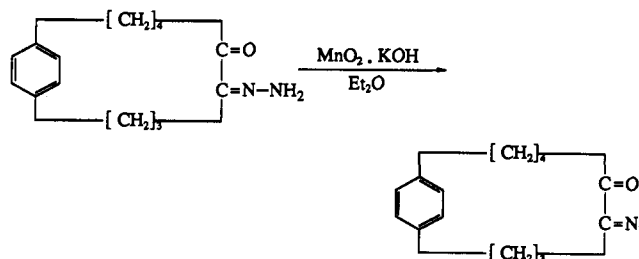
C. Other Routes to α -Diazocarbonyl Compounds

Among other routes to α -diazo ketones that have diminished somewhat in usefulness since the introduction of the diazo-transfer process, are the Forster reaction in which oxime formation at the α -methylene position of a ketone is followed by reaction with chloramine as, for example, in Scheme 11;⁵⁹ dehydrogenation of hydrazones, e.g. as in Scheme 12;⁶⁰ and the Bamford-Stevens tosylhydrazone decomposition in Scheme 13.⁶¹ These reactions have been reviewed in detail by Regitz.^{1a}

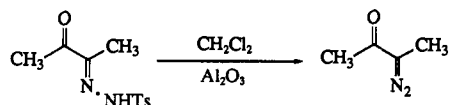
Scheme 11



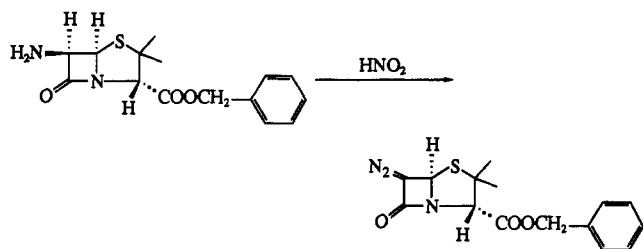
Scheme 12



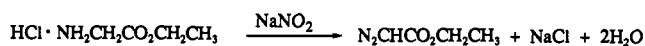
Scheme 13



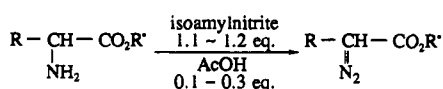
Scheme 14



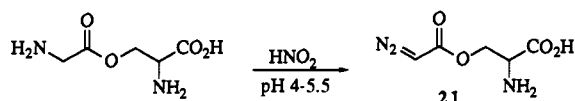
Scheme 15



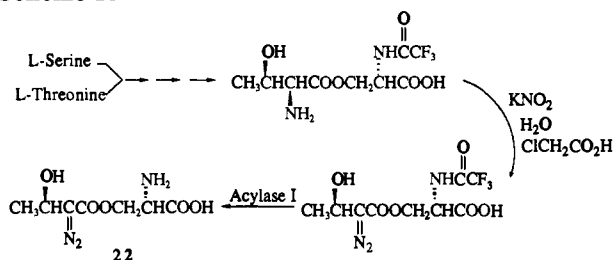
Scheme 16



Scheme 17



Scheme 18

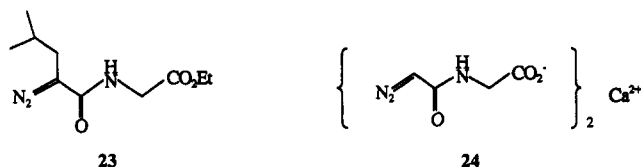


Diazotization remains the method of choice for production of the synthetically versatile 6-diazopenicillanates⁶² from 6-aminopenicillanic acid esters (Scheme 14) and of ethyl diazoacetate from glycine ethyl ester (Scheme 15).⁶³ Extension of the diazotization process to the higher amino acids such as alanine, phenylalanine, isoleucine, and methionine is also possible (Scheme 16),⁶⁴ isoamyl nitrite is the preferred diazotization agent. The antibiotic azaserine 21, active against certain tumours, was isolated from a broth-culture of a streptomycetes⁶⁵ and shown to be *O*-(diazooacetyl)-*L*-serine⁶⁶ and could be prepared by diazotizing the corresponding *O*-glycylserine (Scheme 17).⁶⁷

Recently Nishimura and his collaborators⁶⁸ synthesized a new antitumour antibiotic, FR900840 (22), which was isolated from a culture broth of a strain of streptomycetes, by diazotizing the corresponding amino acid (Scheme 18).

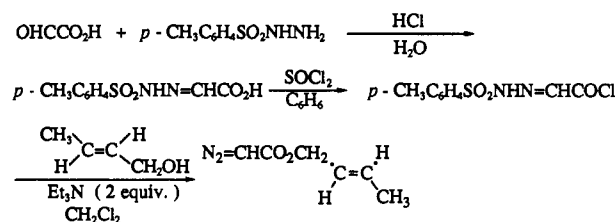
Challis and Latif⁶⁹ reported the synthesis of diazo-peptides by aprotic diazotization with N_2O_4 at -40°C . For example, 23 and 24 were synthesized by this method.

House^{70,71} has devised a very useful scheme for the preparation of diazo esters not readily accessible by diazotization (Scheme 19). Glyoxylic acid is first

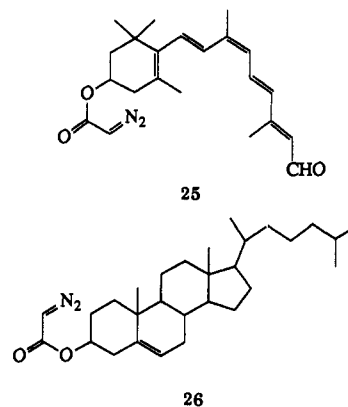


converted into its tosylhydrazone which is then treated with thionyl chloride to form the acyl chloride. The

Scheme 19

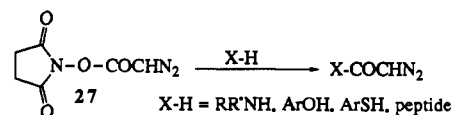


acyl chloride is combined with the appropriate alcohol to produce the ester hydrazone and the process is completed by decomposition of the hydrazone with triethylamine. This method has been used for the synthesis of the photoaffinity diazo esters 25^{72,73} and 26.⁷⁴ Diazoamides have also been synthesized via



House's method. An improved method for the preparation of diazoacetamides includes the cyclohexylcarbodiimide-mediated coupling of an amine with glyoxylic acid tosylhydrazone.^{75,76} A very recent improvement in the House's diazoacetylation by Badet and co-workers⁷⁷ involves the use of succinimidyl diazoacetate 27 which can be easily obtained and stored at room temperature for long periods. Succinimidyl diazoacetate 27 can be used for direct diazoacetylation of aromatic or aliphatic amines, phenols, thiophenol and peptides under mild conditions (Scheme 20).

Scheme 20

D. Chemical Modification of α -Diazocarbonyl Compounds

Another aspect of diazocarbonyl synthesis that is receiving increasing attention, mainly through the work of Regitz's group,⁷⁸ is the chemical modification of the α -position with retention of the diazo function. Numerous examples of substitution reactions at the

Table 1. Substitution Reaction of α -Diazocarbonyl Compounds

reaction	substrate	conditions	product	yield, %	ref(s)
metalation	PhCOCHN ₂	HgO, 20 °C	Hg(CN ₂ COPh) ₂	97	79
	N ₂ HCCOOEt	<i>n</i> -BuLi, -100 °C	LiCN ₂ COOEt		80
	N ₂ HCCOOEt	Ag ₂ O, \leq 0 °C	AgCN ₂ COOEt		81
halogenation	Hg(CN ₂ COOEt) ₂	SO ₂ Cl ₂ , -30 °C	ClCN ₂ CO ₂ Et	30	82
	Hg(CN ₂ COOEt) ₂	Br ₂ , ether-THF, -100 °C	BrCN ₂ CO ₂ Et	80-90	82
	Hg(CN ₂ COOEt) ₂	I ₂ , 0 °C	ICN ₂ CO ₂ Et	70-90	82, 83
nitration	N ₂ HCCOOEt	N ₂ O ₅ , CCl ₄ , -30 °C	O ₂ NCN ₂ CO ₂ Et		84
alkylation	AgCN ₂ CO ₂ Et	H ₂ C=CHCH ₂ I ether, 0 °C	H ₂ C=CHCH ₂ CO(N ₂)O ₂ Et	66	81

diazocarbonyl carbon atom in terminal, acyclic substrates bear witness to the stability of the diazo group, even under quite drastic conditions. In general, the hydrogen atom can be substituted by electrophilic reagents. In addition to halogenation, metalation, nitration, and alkylation processes are possible, leading to new substituted diazocarbonyl compounds. Regitz reviewed these reactions in detail in 1985,^{1a} just a few representative examples are summarized in Table 1. Some uses of the metalated derivatives are discussed in a later section.

III. Diazocarbonyl Reactions in Synthesis

α -Diazocarbonyl compounds constitute a class of organics of quite exceptional flexibility in synthesis. Their most significant reactions are those that proceed with loss of nitrogen which can be brought about thermally, photochemically, or catalytically. Diazocarbonyls react stoichiometrically with many Brønsted acids and electrophiles and catalytically with numerous transition metals and their salts. Reactive intermediates include free carbenes, carbenoids (complexed carbenes), carbonyl ylides, and diazonium cations. We have chosen to group diazocarbonyl reactions not on the basis of common intermediates or mechanisms, but rather according to product type since the latter arrangement makes it much easier to appreciate their versatility in synthesis. α,α -Substitution, for example, the process whereby the diazo group is replaced by two new substituents, may, depending on reaction conditions, span the entire spectrum of reactive intermediates.

The most serviceable of diazocarbonyl reactions are cyclopropanation, Wolff rearrangement, insertion into unactivated C-H bonds, aromatic cycloaddition, α,α -substitution, dipolar addition, acid-catalyzed cyclization of unsaturated substrates, dimerization, electrophilic aromatic substitution, oxidation and ylide formation followed by sigmatropic rearrangement. Without exception, each intermolecular process has its intramolecular counterpart. Indeed it is the success of intramolecular processes that has maintained the high level of interest in diazocarbonyl compounds as synthetic intermediates. Undoubtedly the single most significant contribution to the recent surge of interest in diazocarbonyls which has greatly extended their usefulness in synthesis was the discovery by the Belgian group of Teyssié, Hubert, and Noels and their co-workers of rhodium carboxylate catalysis.⁸⁵⁻⁹³ Although copper catalysts also have important uses in

this area, particularly in cyclopropanation, they do not have the broad spectrum of reactivity associated with rhodium(II) carboxylates which are catalytically active, not just in cyclopropanation, but in C-H, O-H, S-H, and N-H insertion and in aromatic cycloaddition. The Belgian group first introduced rhodium(II) acetate and later were able to modulate catalytic activity using the trifluoroacetate, pivalate, and octanoate.⁸⁵⁻⁹³ Many Rh(II) carboxylates are now readily available. Another feature of the catalyzed reactions that has emerged over the past year or so is the scope for use of chiral catalysts for asymmetric synthesis (*vide infra*).

A. α,α -Substitution Reactions

1. Introduction

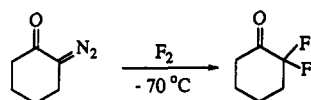
α -Diazocarbonyls undergo an impressive array of α,α -substitution reactions of the type summarized in Scheme 21 in which the diazo group is replaced by two new substituents.

Scheme 21

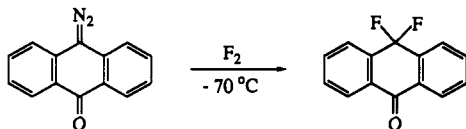


Most diazocarbonyl reactions are in fact α,α -substitutions, but we here restrict this category to processes where X and/or Y are heteroatoms. Although the adduct is formally the product of insertion into the X-Y bond, mechanistically there probably exists a broad spectrum of processes ranging from uncatalyzed electrophilic attack on the diazocarbonyl group to carbene, carbenoid, or ylide formation in situations where thermolysis, photolysis, or metal ion catalysis is employed. Scheme 22 gives some idea of the scope for variation in the reagent with much information now available for reactions in which X-Y is molecular halogen, or where X is a hydrogen atom and Y a halogen or an oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur, selenium, or silicon-based group. The process thus represents a quite general approach to the regiospecific mono- or difunctionalization of a ketone, in many cases under essentially neutral conditions. Furthermore, since many acyclic diazo ketones can be obtained from acyl chlorides, α,α -substitution represents a method of regiospecific functionalization which does not depend on the availability of the parent ketone. It is unnecessary to review here all the reactions in Scheme 22 individually. For convenience in the following discussion they have been collected into groups.

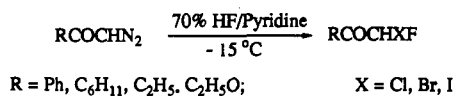
Scheme 24



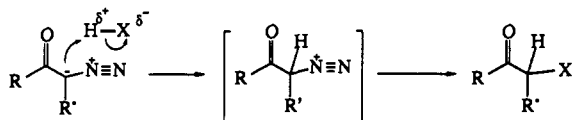
Scheme 25



Scheme 26



Scheme 27



The reaction of fluorine with diazocarbonyl compounds is destructively exothermic and it was not until Leroy and Wackselman¹⁰¹ introduced the moderating device of diluting this halogen with an inert gas at low temperatures that α,α -difluoro adducts could be isolated. Patrick and co-workers¹⁰² used Freon 11 as the inert diluent to convert 2-diazocyclohexanone into 2,2-difluorocyclohexanone in 65% yield (Scheme 24). A somewhat similar set of conditions was used to prepare the difluoroanthrone in Scheme 25.

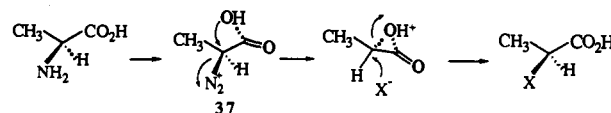
Mixed α -fluoro- α -halo ketones are formed from α -diazo ketones on reaction with either halide ion or *N*-halosuccinimide in 70% polyhydrogen fluoride at 0 °C.¹⁰³ Scheme 26 provides illustrative examples. Recently, Mascaretti¹⁰⁴ reported the stereoselective synthesis of 6-fluoro-6-halopenicillanates.

3. X-Y = Hydrogen Halide

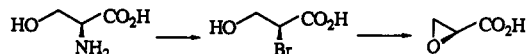
The hydrogen halides, with the exception of hydrogen iodide, react rapidly with diazo ketones to furnish α -halo ketones.^{105,106} The mechanisms of these reactions are probably very similar to that of halogen substitution, initial electrophilic attack on the diazocarbonyl group furnishing a diazonium ion (Scheme 27) from which nitrogen is displaced by halide ion in an S_N2 process.

Of course Scheme 27 does not represent the only route to carbonyl-substituted diazonium ions, an important alternative being dehydration of a protonated diazotic acid generated by nitrosation of a typical amino acid such as L-alanine as shown in Scheme 28. It is appropriate to refer briefly here to the latter process for although the stereochemical outcome of the reaction precludes the intervention of a *neutral* α -diazocarbonyl intermediate, it does involve diazotization and the stereochemistry of the substitution is sufficiently well defined to make the reaction a very useful route to optically active α -halogen and α -hydroxy acids from natural amino acids. As Ingold¹⁰⁷ made clear in the 1950s, the neighboring carboxylic acid group of 37 (Scheme 28) plays a crucial role in the latter stages of the reaction, participating in the expulsion of nitrogen

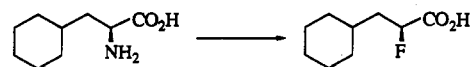
Scheme 28



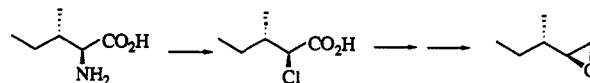
Scheme 29



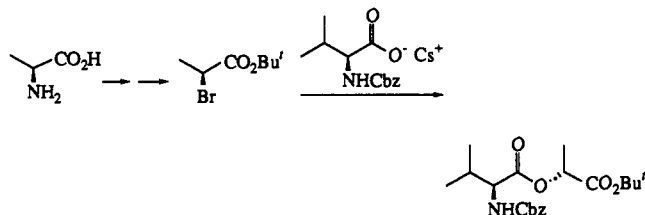
Scheme 30



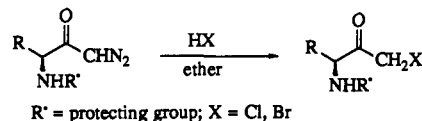
Scheme 31



Scheme 32



Scheme 33

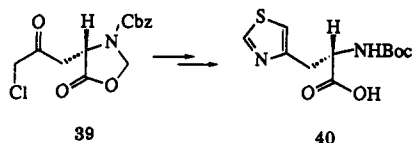
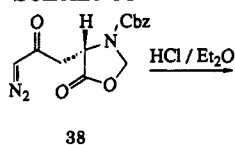


and thereby ensuring that the attacking halide ion, X⁻, enters the α -position with retention of configuration. Schemes 29–32^{108–113} illustrate some applications of this methodology to the production of optically active α -substituted carboxylic acids.

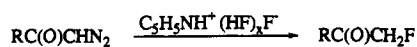
The hydrohalogenation–diazotization process has been used extensively with 6-APA. Cignarella, Pifferi, and Testa¹¹⁴ originally found that diazotization of 6-APA with sodium nitrite in dilute hydrochloric acid produced the 6-chloropenicillanic acid. The stereochemistry of the product was later established by McMillan and Stoodley¹¹⁵ who also confirmed that the 6-diazo derivative 29 was an intermediate in the reaction. The 6-bromopenicillanic acid derived from 6-APA has been extensively used as the key intermediate in the synthesis of penam antibiotics.^{116–118}

Hydrohalogenation of diazo ketones derived from amino acids offers an attractive route to optically active *N*-protected α -amino- α -bromo and chloro ketones of the type shown in Scheme 33.¹¹⁹ The diazo ketone can be titrated with ethereal hydrogen chloride or hydrogen bromide without detectable amounts of racemization. This methodology has been extensively applied in the formation of chloromethyl ketone from peptides. The functionalized cyclic tetrapeptide HC-toxin analogue, *cyclo*[L-2-amino-8-oxo-9-chlorononanoyl-D-prolyl-L-alanyl-D-alanyl], was prepared via the above method.¹²⁰ The products of hydrohalogenation of diazo ketones are useful reaction intermediates, e.g. for keto azides.¹¹⁹ The chloromethyl ketone 38, prepared from the doubly protected L-aspartic acid-derived diazo ketone 39,

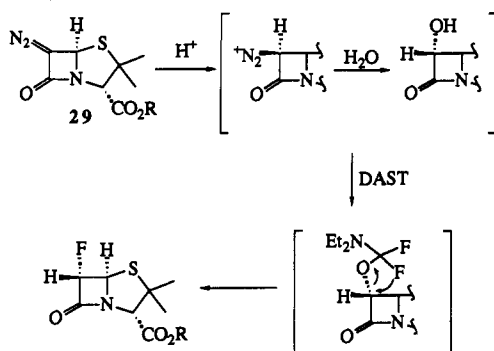
Scheme 34



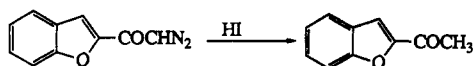
Scheme 35



Scheme 36



Scheme 37



served as a key intermediate in the synthesis of *N*-(*tert*-butoxycarbonyl)-3-(4-thiazolyl)-L-alanine 40 (Scheme 34).¹²¹

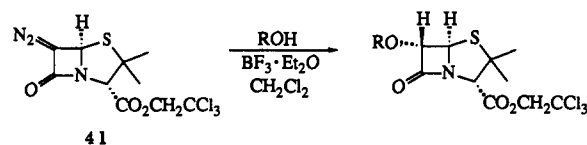
α -Fluoro ketones can be prepared by reaction of α -diazo ketones with 70% polyhydrogen fluoride-pyridine (Scheme 35).¹²² Similarly, diazo ketones derived from *N*-phthaloyl amino acids can be converted into the corresponding fluoro ketones.¹²³ More recent work with 29 indicates that this kind of transformation can also be accomplished with DAST where the α -hydroxy ketone is believed to be an intermediate (Scheme 36).¹⁰⁴

Unlike the other hydrogen halides, hydrogen iodide does not normally produce α -iodo ketones from α -diazo ketones. Rather, its reducing power results in the formation of methyl ketones.¹²⁴ The process can be very efficient; it has been recommended as a particularly mild two-step procedure for converting an acid chloride into a methyl ketone, an example of which is shown in Scheme 37.

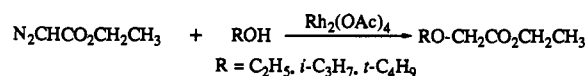
4. X-Y = H-OH, H-OR, H-OCOR, H-OSO₂R, H-OP(O)OR₂

There have been several imaginative uses of α,α -substitution of water and of alcohols to α -diazocarbonyl compounds in contemporary organic synthesis. Although such additions can be brought about by Brønsted and Lewis acids, notably dilute sulfuric acid and boron trifluoride, addition of alcohols to 6-diazopeni-

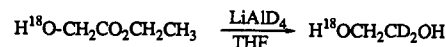
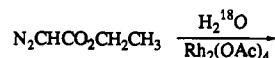
Scheme 38



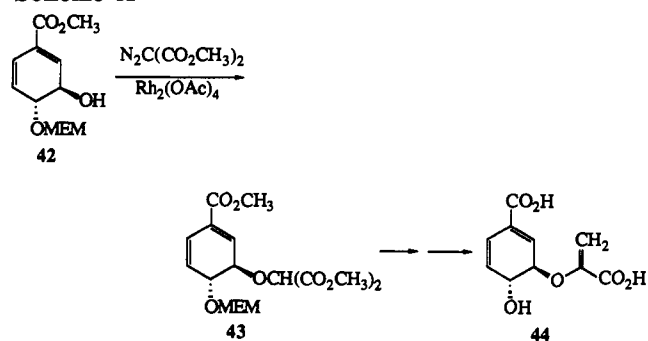
Scheme 39



Scheme 40



Scheme 41



cillanate 41¹²⁵ in Scheme 38 representing an example of the latter, it has been suggested that metal salts offer greater advantages in terms of selectivity and efficiency.

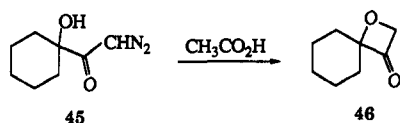
The Wolff rearrangement of diazocarbonyls in the presence of water, alcohols, and carboxylic acids can be virtually eliminated in favor of α,α -substitution in the presence of copper, nickel, palladium, and rhodium catalysts. Of these, rhodium(II) carboxylates appear to be the catalysts of choice, promoting insertion into the O-H bond at very low catalyst concentrations at room temperature as, for example, in Scheme 39.^{86,93}

In a mechanistic study of the structure and stability of C₂H₄O⁺ gas-phase isomers, Baumann and McLeod¹²⁶ synthesized a doubly labeled ethylene glycol (Scheme 40) from ethyl diazoacetate and H₂O¹⁸ with catalysis by rhodium(II) acetate, this route having been chosen so as to produce the maximum incorporation of the ¹⁸O label.

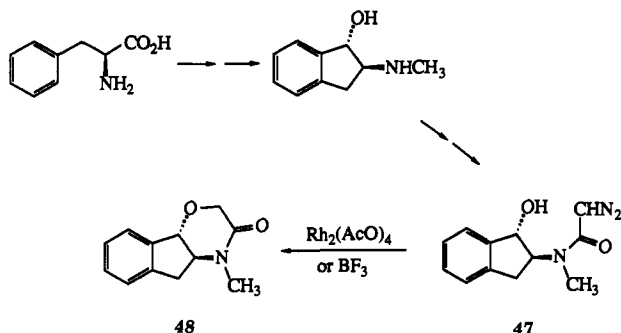
Ganem and co-workers,^{127,128} faced with the difficult task of attaching an enol pyruvate side chain to an already unstable diol in their synthesis of chorismic acid (Scheme 41), found that treatment of hydroxy ester 42 with diazomalonnate in the presence of rhodium(II) acetate furnished the O-H insertion product 43 suitable for further elaboration into the natural product 44.

Berchtold¹²⁹ and Bartlett¹³⁰ and their respective collaborators have also used this approach to the introduction of the enol pyruvate side chain of shikimate-derived metabolites. Furthermore, the phosphonate analogues of chorismic acid have also been synthesized via an approach which involves the rhodium acetate-catalyzed insertion of diazo phosphonoacetate with 2-cyclohexenol.^{131,132} Cholesterol diazoacetate 26

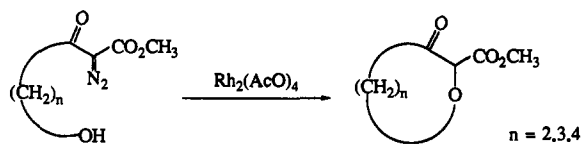
Scheme 42



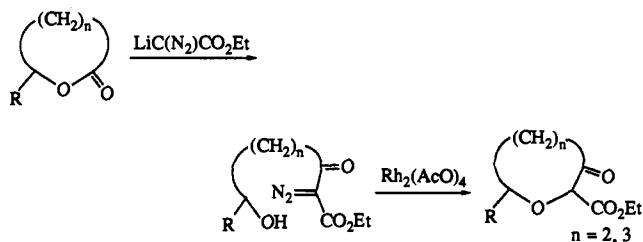
Scheme 43



Scheme 44



Scheme 45



has been synthesized for evaluation as a photolabeling agent for use in biological systems; photolysis in methanol leads to O-H insertion.⁷³

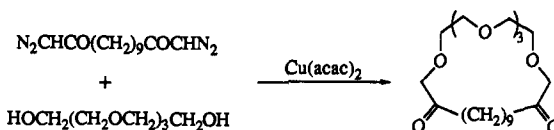
Several aspects of the intramolecular version of O-H insertion of alcohols into diazocarbonyl substrates have been studied, the earliest example being that of Marshall and Walker¹³³ who observed that diazo ketone **45** cyclizes in glacial acetic acid to form the oxetane derivative **46** (Scheme 42).

McClure et al.⁹⁵ found that L-phenylalanine could be transformed into the tetrahydroindeno[1.2-*b*]-1,4-oxazin-3(2*H*)-one (**48**) in Scheme 43 without racemization, cyclization of the intermediate vicinal amino alcohol having been accomplished by O-H insertion of β -hydroxy diazoacetamide **47**; rhodium acetate and boron trifluoride were both catalytically active in the key step, although in this case the Lewis acid gave the better yield.

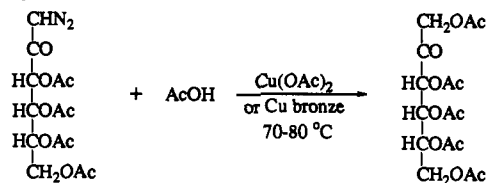
Rapoport¹³⁴ and Moody¹³⁵⁻¹⁴¹ and their respective co-workers have made extensive use of rhodium-catalyzed O-H intramolecular insertion of alcohols in the construction of five-, six-, and seven-membered cyclic ethers. Some examples are shown in Schemes 44 and 45. In Scheme 45 the acyclic diazocarbonyl precursor was conveniently constructed by a ring-opening reaction of the appropriate lactone with lithio diazoacetate.

A final example of the O-H insertion reaction of alcohols is the combined intermolecular-intramolecular

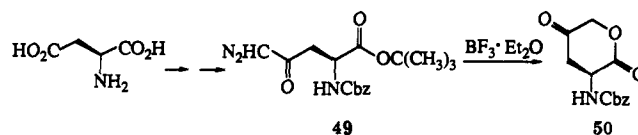
Scheme 46



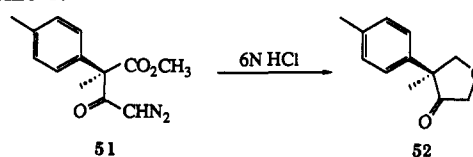
Scheme 47



Scheme 48



Scheme 49



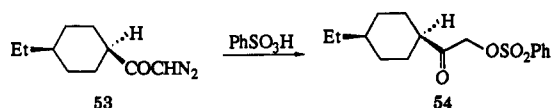
process in Scheme 46 whereby an α,ω -bifunctional diazo ketone combines with an ethylene glycol to produce a macrocyclic diketo crown ether. In this instance the catalyst employed was $\text{Cu}(\text{acac})_2$.¹⁴²

Carboxylic acids react with α -diazocarbonyl compounds on warming to form α -keto esters. Although catalysts are usually unnecessary, copper(II)^{143,144} or rhodium(II)⁸⁵ compounds or boron trifluoride¹²⁵ are often added under which conditions Wolff rearrangement as a competing reaction is suppressed. Wolfrom¹⁴⁴ incorporated this reaction into an homologation sequence in carbohydrate chemistry, converting, for example, a hexose carboxylic acid into the heptose diazo ketone in Scheme 47 and thence to the acetoxy ketone upon addition of acetic acid.

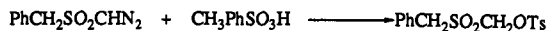
A recent example of intramolecular carboxylate participation occurs in the sequence shown in Scheme 48¹⁴⁵ in which (*S*)-aspartic acid was transformed into diazo ketone **49**. Exposure of the latter to boron trifluoride etherate in nitromethane furnished the aminoketone lactone **50**. In a similar fashion exposure of diazo ketone **51** to 6 N HCl in diethyl ether brought about cyclization to the butyrolactone system (**52**) shown in Scheme 49.¹⁴⁶

The reaction of diazo ketones with sulfonic acids constitutes a convenient, rapid route to α -keto sulfonates. Methane- and ethanesulfonic acid, trifluoromethanesulfonic acid, camphorsulfonic acid, and a variety of substituted benzenesulfonic acids have all been employed in reactions which generally proceed rapidly at room temperature without external catalysis.¹⁴⁷⁻¹⁵³ The transformation of cyclohexyl diazo ketone **53** into the arenesulfonate **54** in Scheme 50 on treatment with benzenesulfonic acid represents a recent application.¹⁴⁷ A variation on this theme is the α,α -substitution of *p*-toluenesulfonic acid with the diazo sulfone in Scheme 51¹⁴⁸ in a novel synthesis of sulfone

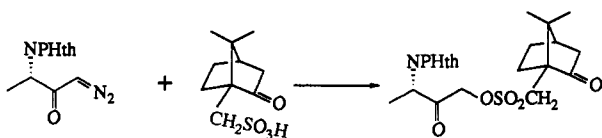
Scheme 50



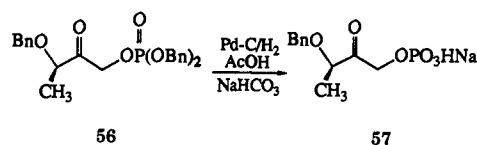
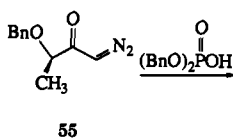
Scheme 51



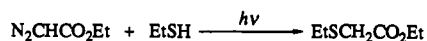
Scheme 52



Scheme 53



Scheme 54



α -tosylates, mixing the reactants at room temperature in dichloromethane being sufficient to bring about reaction.

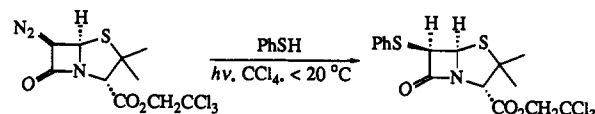
The diazo ketone-*p*-toluenesulfonic acid reaction has been used to generate tosylates suitable for photochemical production of α -keto carbonium ions.¹⁴⁹ The reaction of chiral diazo ketones with (+)-camphorsulfonic acid has been used to assess enantiomeric purity; the reaction of the alanine derived diazo ketone in Scheme 52 provides an illustrative example.¹⁵⁰

α -Hydroxy ketone phosphates can be synthesized by reaction of diazo ketones with dibenzyl phosphate. This transformation was the key step in Whitesides's¹⁵⁴ synthesis of analogues of dihydroxyacetone phosphate 57. Treatment of the optically active diazo ketone 55 with dibenzyl phosphate afforded the protected phosphate 56. Deprotection *via* hydrogenation over palladium gave 57 (Scheme 53).

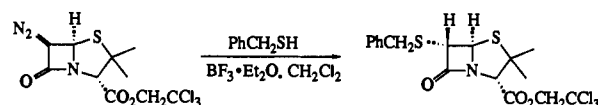
5. X-Y = H-SR, Cl-SR, RS-SR

α,α -Substitution reactions of diazocarbonyls offer versatile ways of placing sulfur-containing substituents adjacent to carbonyl groups in ketones and esters. Photolysis of ethyl diazoacetate in ethanolic ethanethiol leads to carbene insertion into the S-H bond producing moderate yields of ethyl (ethylthio)acetate. The same process can be brought about thermally using AIBN as a radical initiator under which conditions the sulfenylated product is obtained in very high yield (Scheme 54).¹⁵⁵ The photochemical route was used by Sheehan and co-workers¹⁵⁶ to produce the 6β -(phenylthio) adduct as a major product shown in Scheme 55

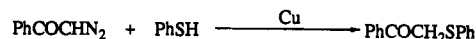
Scheme 55



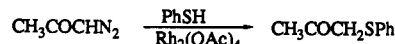
Scheme 56



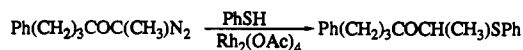
Scheme 57



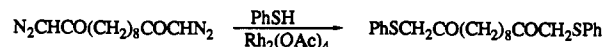
Scheme 58



Scheme 59



Scheme 60

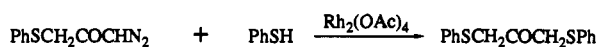


from 6-diazopenicillanate and thiophenol. A short time later Thomas et al.¹²⁵ made the contrasting observation that boron trifluoride-catalyzed addition of benzyl thiol to the same substrate produced the 6α -adduct exclusively (Scheme 56).

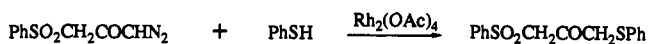
Metal-catalyzed addition of thiols to diazocarbonyls was first investigated by Yates¹⁵⁷ who used copper to catalyze the addition of thiophenol to diazoacetophenone (Scheme 57); in this study thiophenol was employed as the reaction solvent or was present in considerable excess. Very little subsequent work was done in this area until the Belgian group discovered the high catalytic activity of rhodium(II) acetate toward thiophenol addition to ethyl diazoacetate in nonpolar solvents.⁸⁶ This discovery, coinciding with the more general realization of the versatility of α -sulfenylated carbonyl compounds in synthesis, prompted a systematic study of the reactions of both acyclic and cyclic diazo ketones with thiophenol.¹⁵⁸ Simple terminal α -diazo ketones, e.g. diazo ketone in Scheme 58, and thiophenol combine rapidly at room temperature in benzene under rhodium(II) acetate catalysis to furnish α -phenylthio ketones in excellent yield. The nonterminal α -diazo ketone in Scheme 59, prepared from the appropriate acyl chloride and diazomethane, produces the adduct shown when similarly treated, thus demonstrating the regiochemical potential of this route to unsymmetrically sulfenylated ketones which would be difficult to obtain by conventional enol or enolate chemistry with the parent ketone. Acyclic bis diazo ketones also react readily to form bis α -phenylthio diones, e.g. as in Scheme 60.

Diazoketones bearing additional sulfur-containing substituents are also amenable to α,α -substitution with thiophenol, sulfenyl, and sulfonyl precursors affording the products shown in Schemes 61 and 62.¹⁵⁹ α -Diazocycloalkanones as, for example, in Scheme 63 also undergo smooth S-H insertion.¹⁵⁸ Very recently this reaction has been used to elaborate the carboxylic acid

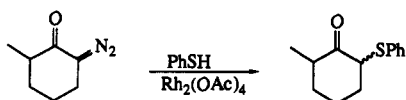
Scheme 61



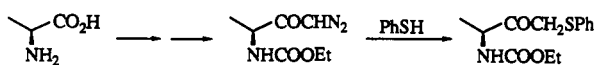
Scheme 62



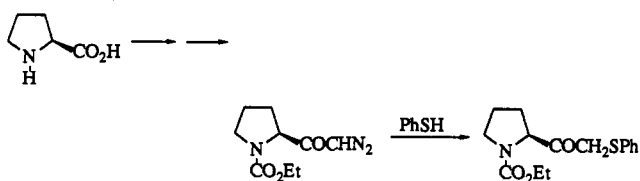
Scheme 63



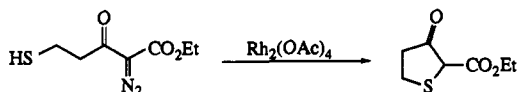
Scheme 64



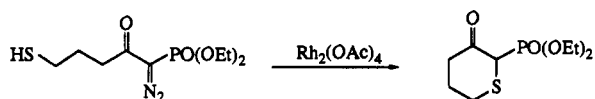
Scheme 65



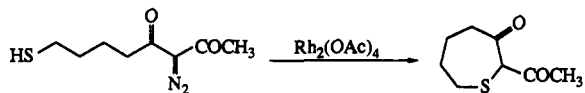
Scheme 66



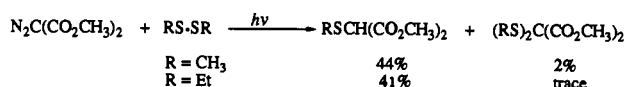
Scheme 67



Scheme 68



Scheme 69

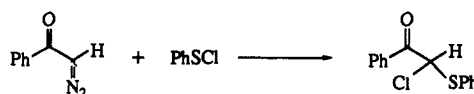


function of N-protected amino acids such as alanine and proline each of which can be transformed, via their respective diazo ketones, into sulfenyl adducts of the type shown in Schemes 64 and 65.¹⁶⁰

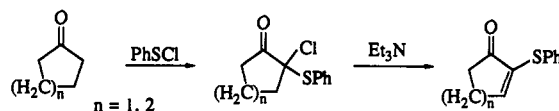
The intramolecular version of the rhodium-catalyzed S-H insertion of diazocarbonyls has been reported by Rapoport¹³⁴ and Moody^{136,161} and their respective co-workers. Five-, six-, and seven-membered cyclic adducts derived from carbenoid S-H insertion are shown in Schemes 66–68. Reactions of carbenoids with disulfides have received very little attention as potential routes to acyl thioacetals. The photochemical route has been explored by Ando et al.¹⁶² who found that monosulfenation tended to predominate over disulfenation. Typically, methyl diazomalonate and dimethyl disulfide gave the product distribution shown in Scheme 69 on benzophenone sensitized photolysis.

Of the various other reactions of diazocarbonyl compounds with sulfur-based reagents that have re-

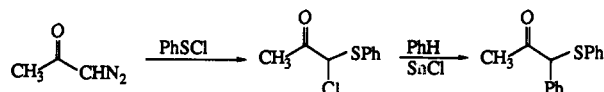
Scheme 70



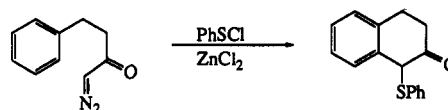
Scheme 71



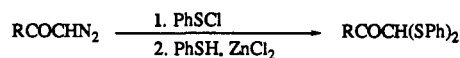
Scheme 72



Scheme 73



Scheme 74

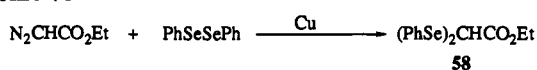


ceived attention, those involving benzenesulfonyl chloride show potential in synthesis. The original observation that benzenesulfonyl chloride and diazo ketones, e.g. Scheme 70, combine to form α -chloro- α -(phenylthio) adducts was made in 1955 by Weygand and Bestmann.¹⁶³ The reaction occurs spontaneously at or below room temperature. The implications of this double substitution, which places two reactive substituents adjacent to a carbonyl group, have been explored in several ways. In the first place, addition of PhSCl followed by hydrogen chloride elimination in diazo ketones with β -hydrogen atoms offers a route to α -sulfenylated α,β -enones. In practice, mixing the reactants at 0 °C followed by addition of triethylamine is all that is necessary to bring about such transformations, examples of which are shown in Scheme 71.¹⁶⁴ Secondly, the α -chloro- α -(phenylthio) adducts are powerful electrophiles for intermolecular and intramolecular aromatic alkylation. For example, sequential treatment of diazoacetone (Scheme 72) with PhSCl, and benzene with stannic chloride catalysis affords the sulfenyl benzyl ketone. The intramolecular reaction leading to a sulfenylated β -tetralone is illustrated in Scheme 73.¹⁶⁴ Yet another outlet for these α,α -adducts of PhSCl and diazo ketones is their ready conversion to (phenylthio)acetals and ketals on exposure to thiophenol with zinc chloride catalysis; Scheme 74 is a representative example.¹⁶⁵

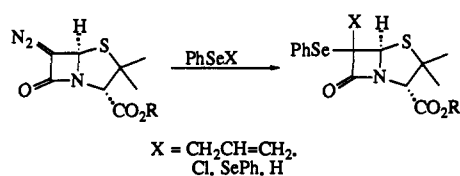
6. X-Y = H-SeR, Cl-SeR, Br-SeR, I-SeR, F-SeR, RSe-SeR

There are close similarities between the reactions of diazocarbonyls with organosulfur reagents and those of their organoselenium counterparts, although the latter are rather less well developed. Pellicciari and his co-workers¹⁶⁶ reported that ethyl diazoacetate and diphenyl diselenide produced the α,α -diphenylseleno adduct 58 (Scheme 75). Thomas and his co-workers¹⁶⁷

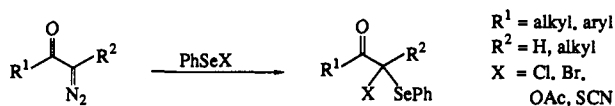
Scheme 75



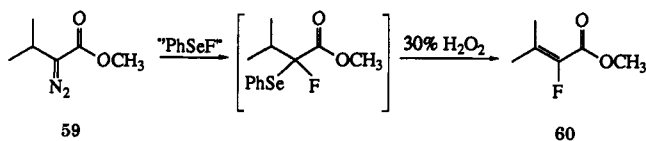
Scheme 76



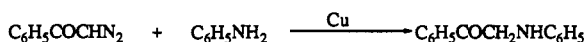
Scheme 77



Scheme 78



Scheme 79



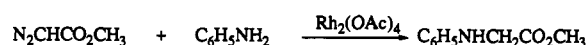
reported the reactions of 6-diazopenicillanates with allyl phenyl selenide, phenylselenenyl chloride, diphenyl diselenide, and benzeneselenol to yield the corresponding 6,6-disubstituted penicillanates; all but reaction with phenylselenenyl chloride required catalysis (Scheme 76). McKervey and co-workers^{168,169} reported that phenylselenenyl derivatives, PhSe-X ($\text{X} = \text{Cl}, \text{Br}, \text{OAc}, \text{SCN}$), react readily with α -diazo ketones with loss of nitrogen, to furnish α -phenylselenenyl- α -X ketone adducts in very good yields (Scheme 77). Only reaction with phenylselenenyl thiocyanate required catalysis. Similarly, reactions of PhSeSeCN with diazo ketones have also been reported.¹⁷⁰

α -Fluoro- α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compound **60** can be prepared via a sequence involving the reaction of a diazocarbonyl such as **59** with a phenylselenenyl fluoride equivalent (Scheme 78). The phenylselenenyl fluoride equivalent can be prepared *in situ* by the reaction of silver(I) fluoride with phenylselenenyl bromide in dichloromethane under ultrasound irradiation. The corresponding α -fluoro- α -phenylseleno carbonyl adduct was oxidized to α -fluoro- α,β -unsaturated ester **60**.¹⁷¹

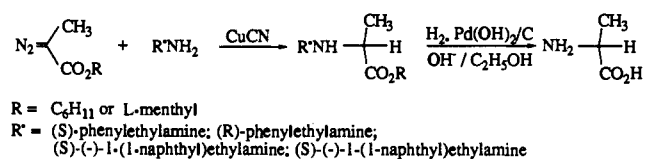
7. $\text{X-Y} = \text{H-NR}^1\text{R}^2$

The insertion of α -keto carbenes or carbenoids into N-H bonds attracted little attention as a synthetic route to α -amino ketones or esters until 1978 when the first example of its use in bicyclic β -lactam synthesis was published from Merck laboratories.¹⁷² Since then there have been numerous demonstrations of the power of this reaction, especially the intramolecular version leading to nitrogen heterocycles. The history of the N-H insertion reaction parallels closely that of its O-H and S-H counterparts, with early evidence that α -diazo acetophenone and aniline under copper catalysis yield the α -anilino ester in Scheme 79.¹⁶⁷ Cuprous cyanide

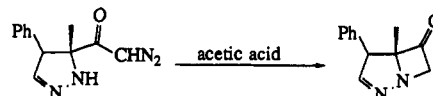
Scheme 80



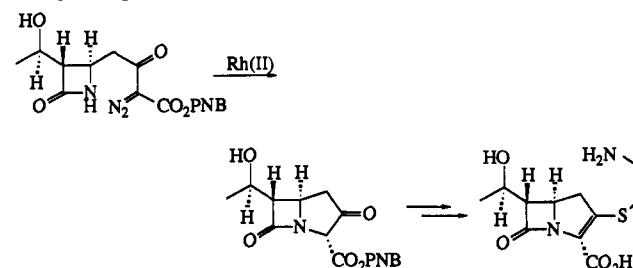
Scheme 81



Scheme 82



Scheme 83



or chloride were later used as catalysts for the insertion of ethyl diazoacetate into the N-H bond of piperidine, morpholine, and *n*-butylamine.¹⁷³ Almost inevitably now, introduction of rhodium catalysts led to major improvements, the reaction in Scheme 80 furnishing 70% of the insertion product in the presence of rhodium(II) acetate.⁸⁶ Nicoud and Kagan¹⁷⁴ used cuprous cyanide as catalyst in the sequence shown in Scheme 81, the objective being to bring about N-H insertion of diazopropionates with chiral benzylamines and thereby effect an asymmetric synthesis of alanine after debenzoylation and hydrolysis. In the event, although the insertion reaction was successful, the enantioselection accompanying the creation of the new stereogenic center was disappointingly low (15–26% ee).

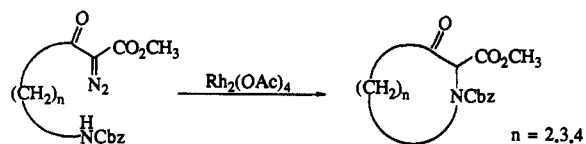
By far the most successful N-H insertions have been in intramolecular reactions leading to small-ring bicyclic heterocycles. Although Moore and Medeiros¹⁷⁵ in 1959 reported the formation of an azacyclobutane derivative from the reaction of the diazo ketone in Scheme 82 with acetic acid, the potential of N-H insertion was not appreciated until Cama and Christensen¹⁷² at Merck reported the conversion of a penicillin analogue into the carbapenem nucleus via rhodium-catalyzed insertion of a keto carbenoid into the N-H bond of the β -lactam, a process which was later to become the key step in the Merck synthesis of the antibiotic thienamycin (Scheme 83).^{176,177} The N-H insertion proceeds in yields far exceeding 90% on a production scale.

This and many subsequent applications, a few of which are summarized in Table 2,^{1b} suggest that the N-H carbenoid insertion reaction is probably the most efficient method yet devised for synthesizing highly strained β -lactam bicyclic systems. This transformation is also among the most practicable carbenoid reactions in organic synthesis.

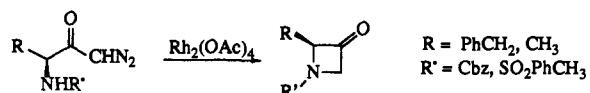
Table 2. Synthesis of β -Lactam Bicyclic Systems

Diazocarbonyl	Product	Reference
		176-202
		203
		204
		205, 206
		207-209
		210-212
		213

Scheme 84



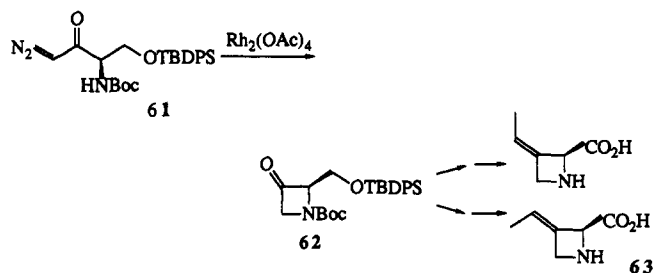
Scheme 85



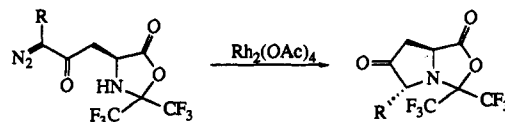
Intramolecular carbenoid N-H insertion has been demonstrated to be a mild, efficient, and regioselective method for the construction of various-sized aza rings (Scheme 84).¹³⁴ The formation of the 3-oxoazetidine-2-carboxylate (Scheme 84, $n = 1$) via rhodium-catalyzed N-H insertion has received considerable attention. Boc-protected 3-oxoazetidine-2-carboxylate, obtained via this protocol, was further transformed to the racemic polyoxamic acid which is a constituent of the nucleoside tripeptide antibiotic polyoxins.²¹⁴ Diazo ketones derived from N-protected α -amino acids undergo intramolecular N-H insertion under rhodium(II) catalysis to form optically active substituted 3-azetidinones (Scheme 85).²¹⁵ The substituted 3-azetidinone **62**, obtained from the N- and O-protected D-serine-derived diazo ketone **61**, can be transformed into optically active *cis*- and *trans*-polyoxamic acid **63** (Scheme 86).²¹⁶

Other examples of intramolecular N-H insertion leading to five- and six-membered nitrogen-containing heterocycles include those in Schemes 87²¹⁷ and 88,²¹⁸ the catalyst being rhodium acetate in both cases.

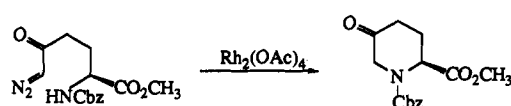
Scheme 86



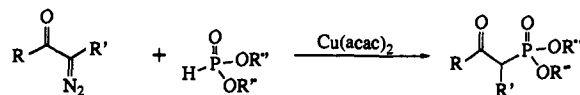
Scheme 87



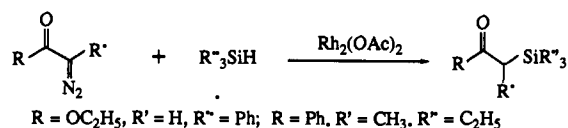
Scheme 88



Scheme 89



Scheme 90

8. $X-Y = H-P(O)(OR)_2$

Carbenoid insertions into the P-H bond of phosphites are rather less well developed. Polozov and co-workers²¹⁹ have reported a carbenoid P-H insertion which is illustrated in Scheme 89. The diazo compounds studied included α -diazo ketones, α -diazo esters, and 2-diazo 1,3-diketones.

An analogous reaction with a diazo ketone derived from phthaloyl-protected L-alanine proceeds via P-H insertion with diethyl hydrogen phosphite. However, extension of this reaction to other types of protected (for example, Cbz, Boc) amino acid-derived diazo ketones was unsuccessful.²²⁰

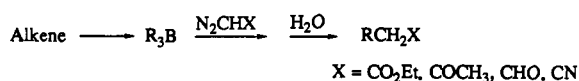
9. $X-Y = H-SiR_3$

Carbenoid insertion into Si-H bonds has been used to give the corresponding α -silyl carbonyl adducts. However, this type reaction has only been employed by Doyle's group using simple diazocarbonyl precursors as shown in Scheme 90.²²¹

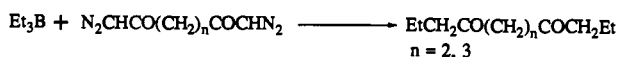
10. $X-Y = R-BR_2$

Trialkylboranes, generated from alkenes via hydroboration, react with α -diazocarbonyl compounds with expulsion of nitrogen to form intermediates which on hydrolysis furnish α -alkylated carbonyl compounds. Hooz and his co-workers have reported such alkylations with ethyl diazoacetate, diazoacetone, diazoaceto-

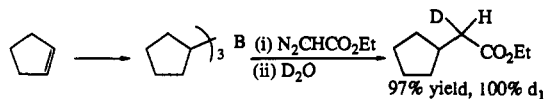
Scheme 91



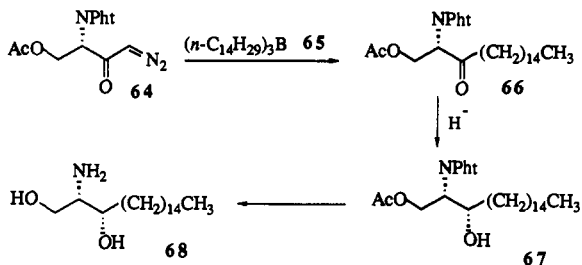
Scheme 92



Scheme 93



Scheme 94



phenone, diazoacetaldehyde, diazoacetonitrile.²²²⁻²²⁵ The process, overall, summarized in Scheme 91, represents the homologation of an alkene to a carbonyl compound or a nitrile.

Alkylation of bis diazo ketones is also possible, triethylborane furnishing symmetrical diketones of the type shown in Scheme 92 in high yield.²²⁶ Alkylation with boranes derived from terminal alkenes and cyclopentene proceed rapidly and in very good yields at low temperatures while sterically hindered boranes react sluggishly with lower yields of products.²²³

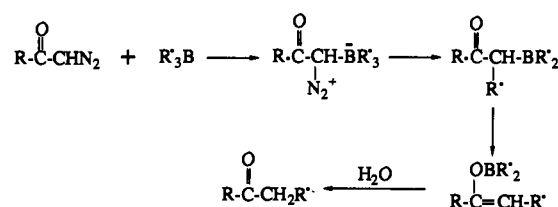
When D₂O is used instead of H₂O in the hydrolytic stage of the process, high yields of site-specific mono-deuterated esters and ketones can be produced. Alkylation of ethyl diazoacetate with cyclopentene (Scheme 93) provides an illustrative example.²²⁷

Newman^{228,229} has applied this methodology to the synthesis of *D-threo*-sphinganine 68. Thus, treatment of the diazo ketone 64 derived from the doubly protected *L*-serine with a trialkylborane 65 gave ketone 66. A stereoselective reduction of the keto group of 66 with tri-*tert*-butoxyaluminum hydride produced the desired *threo* configuration in alcohol 67. Acidic methanolysis of the acetoxy group, followed by hydrazinolysis of the phthaloyl moiety, gave *D-threo*-sphinganine 68 (Scheme 94).

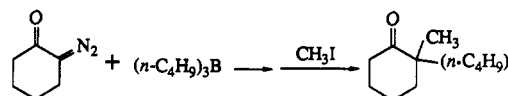
The intermediates responsible for this type of behavior are believed to be enol borinates formed in a sequence commencing with coordination of the diazo-carbonyl compound to the acidic trialkylborane and followed by a rapid 1,2-alkyl shift from boron to carbon with loss of nitrogen. Migration of boron to oxygen forms the enol borinate which is rapidly hydrolyzed by water (Scheme 95).

Both Hooz and Pasto recognized that under anhydrous conditions these enol borinates could be intercepted in a variety of synthetically useful processes. Various ways were devised of producing both internal and terminal enol borinates in a regiospecific fashion

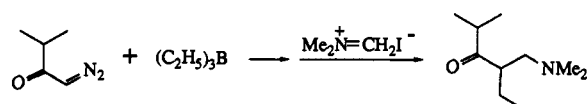
Scheme 95



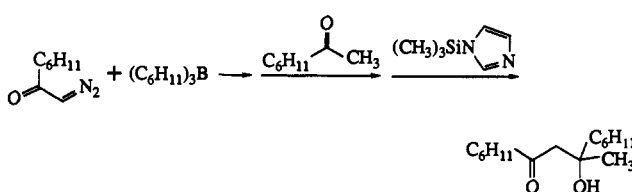
Scheme 96



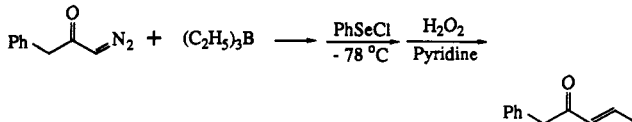
Scheme 97



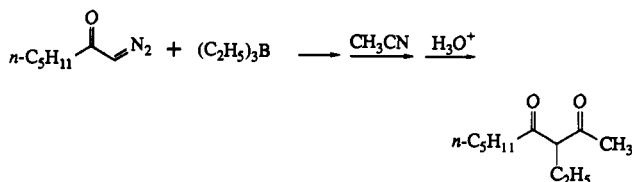
Scheme 98



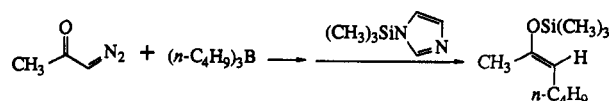
Scheme 99



Scheme 100



Scheme 101



from diazocarbonyl precursors. Significant applications of these intermediates include regiospecific synthesis of α,α -dialkylated ketones (Scheme 96),^{230,231} regiospecific synthesis of Mannich bases by reaction with dimethyl(methylene)ammonium iodide (Scheme 97),²³² aldol addition to aldehydes and ketones (Scheme 98),²³³ regiospecific synthesis of unsymmetrical acyclic enones by addition of phenylselenyl chloride followed by oxidative elimination (Scheme 99),²³⁴ regiospecific synthesis of 1,3-diketones via boroxazine formation with nitriles (Scheme 100),²³⁵ and regio- and stereocontrolled transformation into enol silyl ethers via reaction with *N*-(trimethylsilyl)imidazole (Scheme 101).²³⁶ In all of these processes a diazocarbonyl precursor was employed to generate the enol borinate.

B. C–H Insertion Reactions

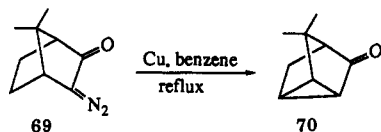
1. Introduction

The past 20 years have witnessed a significant increase in the utilization of diazocarbonyl compounds as precursors in carbon–carbon bond-forming reactions. Intramolecular carbene insertion into C–H bonds has assumed strategic importance in organic synthesis. To demonstrate the broad scope of its applications in synthesis, representative examples of this transformation are highlighted in this section. Insertion reactions of carbenes into C–H bonds have attracted much attention since the first discovery by Meerwein, Rathjen, and Werner.²³⁷ The insertion process can proceed intermolecularly or intramolecularly. From the synthetic point of view, intermolecular C–H insertion is not generally useful because of low selectivity and competition from intramolecular reactions. Therefore, the examples of synthetic applications illustrated here are all intramolecular processes. Intramolecular insertion of keto carbenes into unactivated C–H bonds sometimes allows transformations which would otherwise be difficult to achieve. In this section, reactions have been organized according to the ring size produced on cyclization. In general, five-membered ring formation is the favored process. However, the construction of other ring sizes (in general four- and six-membered rings) by carbene C–H insertion is also possible. The regioselectivity which leads to the control of ring size in a particular molecule depends upon the type of diazo function, the degree of substitution of the carbon where insertion takes place, and steric and electronic factors.

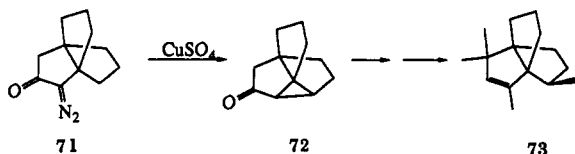
2. Three-Membered Ring Formation

Geometrically rigid structures favor intramolecular insertions. In some special cases C–H insertion results in three-membered ring compounds. For example, diazocamphor **69** was catalytically converted into cyclocamphanone **70** (Scheme 102).²³⁸ The formation of the cyclopropyl ring via C–H insertion has also been used in the stereocontrolled synthesis of (\pm)-modhephene (**73**, Scheme 103).²³⁹ Thus, treatment of diazo ketone **71** with a copper catalyst afforded the intermediate **72**, which was then converted to **73** via a few subsequent steps.

Scheme 102



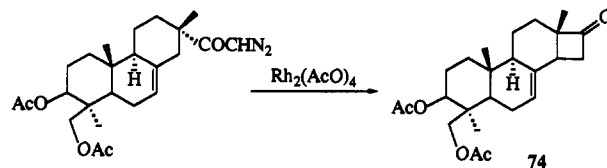
Scheme 103



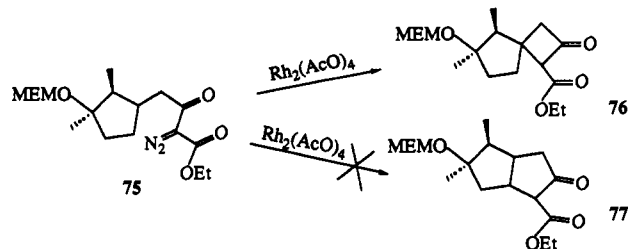
3. Four-Membered Ring Formation

a. Four-Membered Carbocycles. There are few examples of four-membered carbocycle formation via intramolecular C–H insertion.^{240–243} It usually is ob-

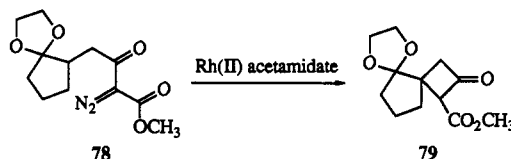
Scheme 104



Scheme 105



Scheme 106



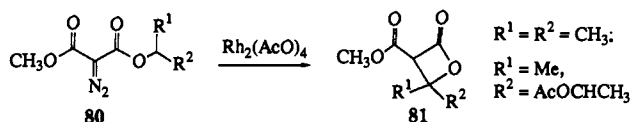
served as a low-yield product along with five-membered ring formation. However, in some instances with suitable substrates, moderate yields of cyclobutanone products can be obtained. Ceccherelli and co-workers²⁴² have reported the formation of the D-norsteroid system **74** (yield 53%) (Scheme 104).

Cane and co-workers²⁴³ reported that catalytic decomposition of diazo ester **75** resulted in spirocyclobutanone **76** in 55% yield; none of the bicycle[3.3.0]octanone derivative **77** could be detected. It is possible that the combined 1,3-interactions of the MEM ether and the secondary methyl group hinder approach of the carbenoid to the secondary C–H bond, thereby directing attack to the opposite face of the cyclopentane ring on which only a tertiary hydrogen atom is accessible, thus leading to spirocyclobutanone **76** (Scheme 105).

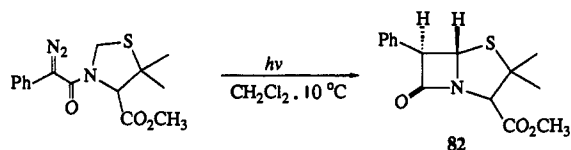
The nature of the transition metal ligands also influence four-membered carbocycle formation. Catalytic decomposition of α -diazo- β -keto ester **78** by rhodium(II) acetamide²⁴⁴ favors the formation of a four-membered product **79** (Scheme 106),²⁴⁵ whereas rhodium(II) triphenylacetate favors cyclopentanone formation.²⁴⁵

b. Four-Membered Heterocycles. A wide range of four-membered heterocycles are accessible. These include β -lactones,^{246,247} β -lactams,^{248–264} and 1,2-azaphosphetidines²⁶⁵ which can be formed via the intramolecular C–H insertion reaction of carbenes or carbenoids derived from α -diazo esters and α -diazo amides. Lee and his co-workers²⁴⁶ reported that rhodium(II) acetate-catalyzed intramolecular C–H insertion of alkyl methyl diazomalones **80** results in the formation of β -lactone **81** (Scheme 107). The preference for four-membered ring formation is probably due to the activation of the adjacent oxygen atom and the intrinsic conformational bias of metallocarbenoid spe-

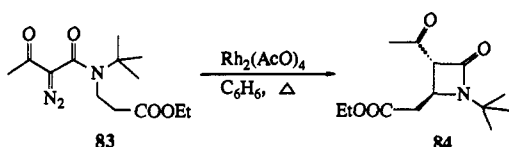
Scheme 107



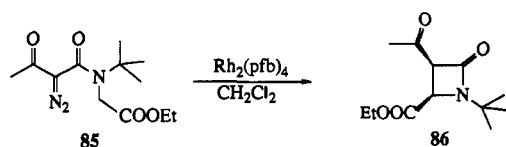
Scheme 108



Scheme 109



Scheme 110



cies formed from diazomalones. The latter factor may have the more dominant effect. It is noteworthy that a suitably mixed malonate-maloamide-derived diazo precursor undergoes cyclization to the β -lactam in preference to the β -lactone.²⁴⁷

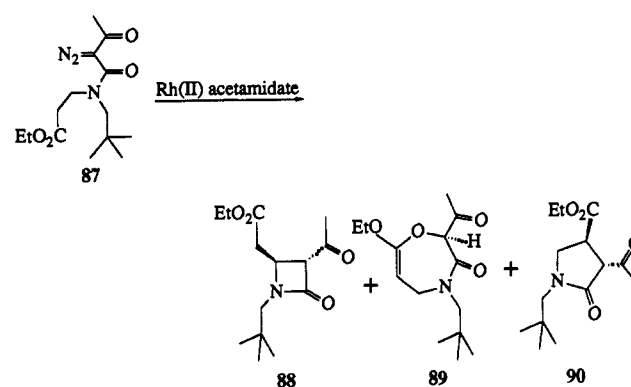
Since Corey's demonstration of the intramolecular C-H insertion reaction in the construction of methyl-6-phenylpenicillinate **82**²⁴⁸ (Scheme 108), the reaction has attracted attention as a versatile procedure for the construction of the β -lactam ring. Earlier work²⁴⁸⁻²⁵⁸ was carried out *via* photochemical and thermal decomposition of diazo amides, but suffered from low yields and low selectivities. Since then rhodium(II) acetate has been demonstrated to be the catalyst of choice. A number of examples²⁵⁹⁻²⁶¹ of β -lactam formation have been reported via catalytic decompositions of diazo amides.

Doyle and co-workers²⁶²⁻²⁶⁴ have demonstrated that the use of rhodium(II) carboxylates as catalysts for the construction of the β -lactam ring via C-H insertion, gives high yields and exceptional selectivity. Decomposition of **83** in refluxing benzene, catalyzed by rhodium(II) acetate, forms β -lactam **84**, solely as the *trans* isomer, in nearly quantitative yield (Scheme 109).²⁶³ In contrast, diazoacetoacetamide **85** with only one methylene group between the ester and nitrogen groups, when treated with $\text{Rh}_2(\text{pfb})_4$ in refluxing dichloromethane, underwent conversion to β -lactam **86** (89% yield, *cis* isomer only) (Scheme 110).²⁶³

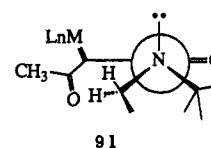
Further reports²⁶⁴ indicate that catalytic decomposition of diazo acetoacetamide **87** forms not only the β -lactam **88**, but also the carbonyl ylide derived product **89** and the γ -lactam insertion product **90** (Scheme 111). However, by employing the electronically selective rhodium(II) acetamidate as catalyst, the β -lactam product **88** was the principal insertion product.

The success of the above transformation was attributed to an activating influence on the C-H bond

Scheme 111

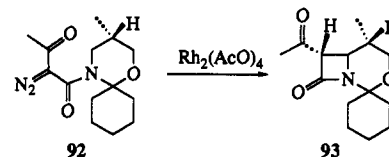


adjacent to the amide nitrogen atom, and conformational preferences which placed the reacting C-H bond in close proximity to the carbenoid center as shown in **91**.²⁶³



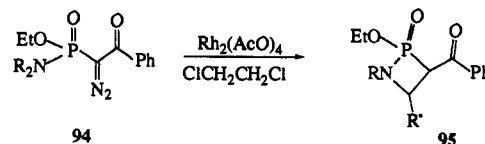
An example of stereocontrolled C-H insertion with a cyclic diazo amide precursor **92** giving an optically active β -lactam **93** was reported by Brown and Southgate (Scheme 112).²⁶¹ The ketone reduction product from **93** is a key intermediate in the synthesis of 1-methyl carbapenems.

Scheme 112



Rees and co-workers²⁶⁵ have reported a catalyzed decomposition of the α -diazo- β -keto phosphonamidates **94** to give the four-membered ring product **95** (Scheme 113). Although the reaction proceeded in low yield, it does provide a ready synthetic approach to 2-oxa-1,2-azaphosphetidine.

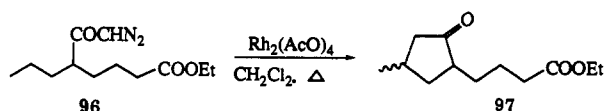
Scheme 113



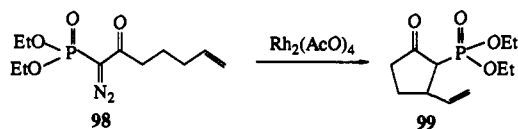
4. Five-Membered Ring Formation

a. Five-Membered Ring Carbocycles. Most methods²⁶⁶ for five-membered carbocycle construction depend on the joining together of previously functionalized carbon atoms. Catalyzed decomposition of α -diazo-carbonyl compounds, involving cyclization to a previously unfunctionalized carbon atom, provides a powerful method for the construction of the five-membered carbocyclic system. This strategy is particularly useful because the diazocarbonyl precursors are readily available and cyclopentanes are important structural units

Scheme 114



Scheme 115



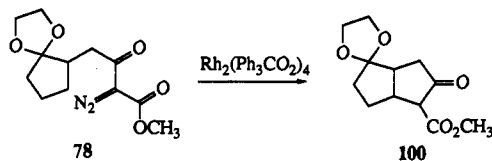
of natural products. This area represents one of the most useful applications of intramolecular diazocarbonyl reactions.

Early work on this type of transformation was based on the use of copper catalysts.²⁶⁷ Wenkert²⁴⁰ was the first to report the effectiveness of rhodium(II) carboxylates. Taber and co-workers²⁶⁸⁻²⁷⁴ have undertaken a comprehensive examination of the $\text{Rh}_2(\text{AcO})_4$ -catalyzed intramolecular C-H insertion of α -diazo- β -keto esters into freely rotating aliphatic side chains. The results not only show that cyclization to the five-membered ring is a favored process²⁶⁸ but also that C-H insertion into a more substituted γ -carbon occurs at a faster rate than insertion into a less substituted γ -carbon.²⁷² Furthermore, insertion into aliphatic methylenes is favored over allylic and benzylic methylenes.^{272,274} These regioselectivities were attributed to electronic effects. Recently, Doyle and co-workers²⁷⁵ have shown that if the possible sites for insertion cannot present their C-H bonds to the carbene center with equal probability for C-H insertion, regioselectivity is governed more by conformational preference than by electronic preference. Catalytic decomposition of a series of α -diazo ketones bearing two γ centers derived from α,β -unsaturated acids yielding 2-cyclopentenones and 2-alkylidenecyclopentanones have been reported by Ceccherelli and co-workers.²⁷⁶ In this case, the regioselectivity of the insertion is low. Synthetically this indicates that the electronic effect of the olefinic bond is not generally useful in regiocontrol. Stork and Nakatani²⁷⁷ reported that electron-withdrawing groups, such as carboxyl functions, can deactivate a C-H insertion site one or two atoms away. Cyclization of 96 with rhodium(II) acetate afforded the cyclopentanone ester 97 as a mixture of two stereoisomers (83% yield) (Scheme 114). This approach to control of regiochemistry could potentially be applied in the construction of more complex substituted carbocycles.

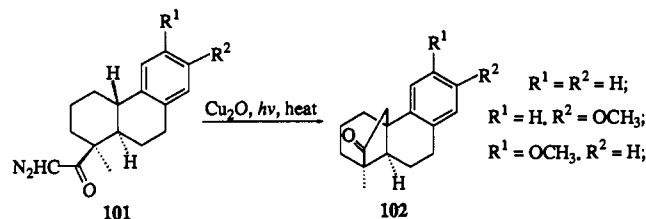
In addition to the preparation of α -carboalkoxy cyclopentanones from the corresponding acyclic α -diazo- β -keto esters, Monteiro²⁷⁸ has reported that acyclic α -diazo- β -keto phenylsulfones undergo smooth intramolecular carbenoid cyclizations under rhodium(II) catalysis to afford α -phenylsulfonyl cyclopentanones. Also, α -diazo- β -ketoalkylphosphonates and phosphine oxides undergo cyclization to form the corresponding substituted cyclopentanones.²⁷⁹ Similarly, treatment of 98 with rhodium(II) acetate leads to 2-(diethoxyphosphoryl)-3-vinylcyclopentanone (99, Scheme 115). This material was subsequently converted to (\pm)-sarkomycin in four steps.²⁸⁰

Sonawane and co-workers²⁴¹ have clearly demonstrated that conformationally rigid carbon frameworks

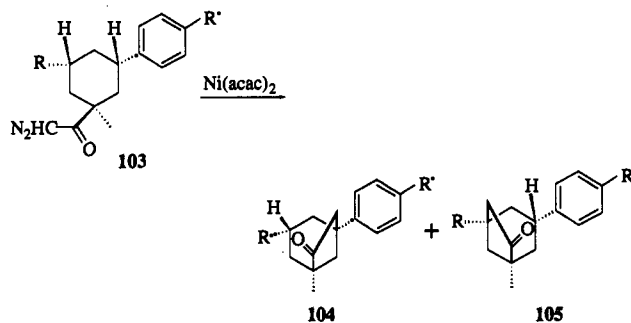
Scheme 116



Scheme 117



Scheme 118



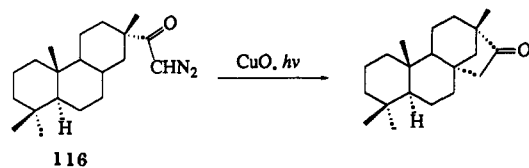
can be advantageously utilized to achieve C-C bond formation by highly selective metal-carbene C-H insertion and in many instances have shown that cyclopentane annulation in the cyclic system can readily be achieved. The ligand on the transition metal, electronic effects, and, in particular, steric factors, play an important role in governing selectivity.

Recent work on the design and synthesis of rhodium(II) catalysts shows that variation of the ligand type of the rhodium(II) catalyst can affect site selectivity. Ikegami and his co-workers²⁴⁵ found that in the catalytic decomposition of α -diazo- β -keto ester 78, the rhodium(II) triphenylacetate, which bears a sterically bulky bridging ligand on rhodium, favors the formation of a five-membered ring to form 100 (Scheme 116).²⁴⁵

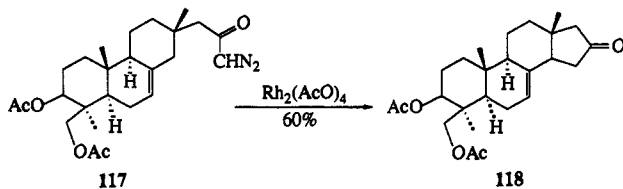
In connection with synthetic studies toward complex diterpenoids, Ghatak and co-workers²⁸¹⁻²⁸³ have reported the copper-catalyzed decomposition of the rigid tricyclic diazomethyl ketone 101 to the corresponding tetracyclic bridged ketone 102 in good yield, the product arising from reaction at the benzylic carbon-hydrogen bond (Scheme 117). Ketone 102 served as a key step in the total syntheses of atisine, reatchine, and gibberellin A₁₅.²⁵⁷⁻²⁵⁹ Furthermore, the regioselectivity of the carbenoid decomposition of diazocarbonyl precursor 103, which bears various substituents, forming two types of regioisomer 104, 105, has been examined by Ghatak's group (Scheme 118).²⁸⁴

The carbenoid C-H insertion approach provides a general pathway for the preparation of a wide variety of natural products containing a cyclopentane system. The following representative examples, involving carbenoid C-H insertion forming five-membered carbocycles, illustrate the utility of this chemistry.

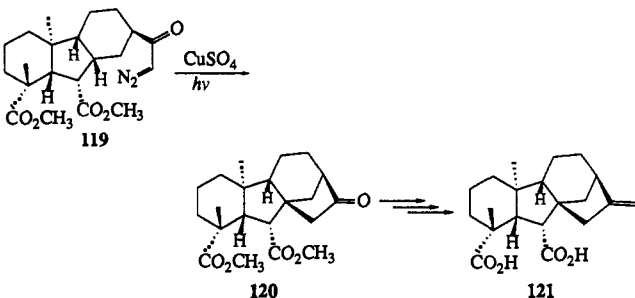
Scheme 119



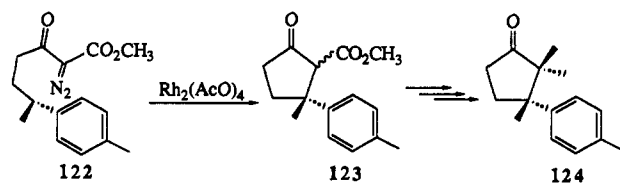
Scheme 120



Scheme 121



Scheme 122



Yoshikoshi and co-workers²³⁵ reported a partial synthesis of isohibaene. It involves, as the key step, the intramolecular insertion reaction of a ketocarbene generated by the cuprous oxide-catalyzed decomposition of diazo ketone 116 under irradiation (Scheme 119).

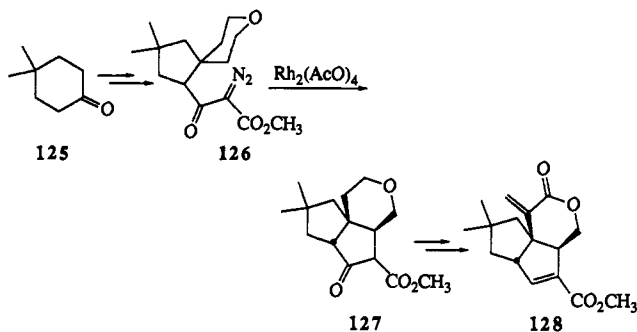
The conversion of an isopimaradiene system 117 into the steroid skeleton 118 was achieved by Wenkert's group (Scheme 120),²⁴⁰ and carbenoid insertion into the C-8 β H bond in 119, forming the D-ring (120), was a crucial step in Nakata and Tahara's synthesis of gibberellin A₁₂ (121, Scheme 121).²⁸⁶

The optically pure α -dialzo- β -keto ester 122, prepared by alkylation of a chiral oxazolidone, on treatment with Rh₂(AcO)₄ was converted into 123 with retention of configuration; standard functional group manipulation was used to transform 123 into the (+)- α -cuparenone (124, Scheme 122).²⁷¹

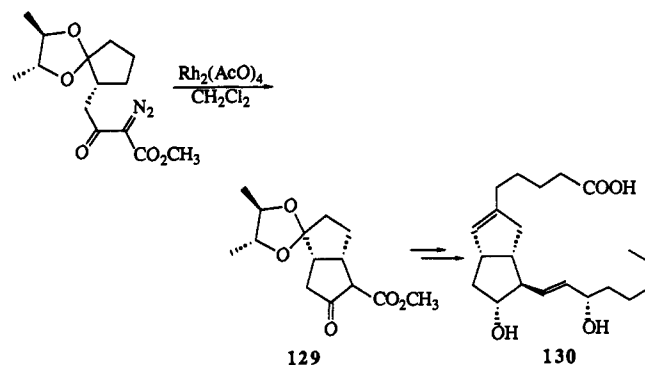
Treatment of α -dialzo- β -keto ester 126, prepared in several steps from 4,4-dimethylcyclohexanone (125), with catalytic Rh₂(AcO)₄ in dichloromethane at room temperature led to smooth conversion to the tricyclic ether 127, which is a key intermediate in Taber's approach to the synthesis of the sesquiterpene antibiotic pentalenolactone E methyl ester (128, Scheme 123).²⁷⁰

(+)-Isocarbacyclin 130, one of the most promising therapeutic agents for cardiovascular and circulatory disorders, was synthesized by a sequence²⁸⁷ in which the key step was the regiocontrolled construction of

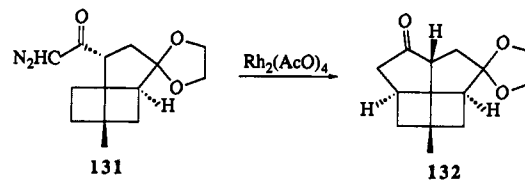
Scheme 123



Scheme 124



Scheme 125



the optically active bicyclic β -oxomethyl ester 129 via rhodium(II)-catalyzed intramolecular C-H insertion (Scheme 124).²⁶⁸

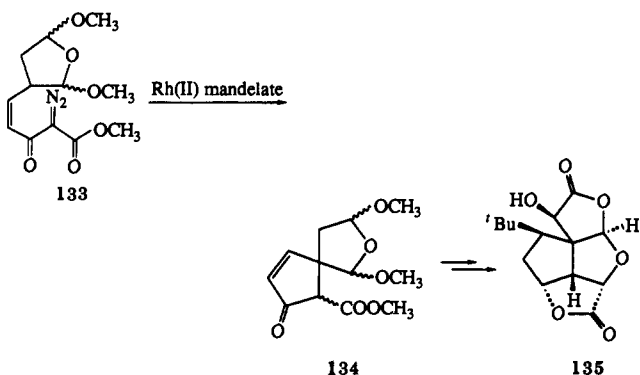
A series [4,4,4,5]fenestrane and [4,4,4,4]fenestrane derivatives have been synthesized via the carbenoid C-H insertion process.²⁸⁹⁻²⁹¹ For example, treatment of diazo ketone 131 with rhodium(II) acetate in dichloromethane caused rapid decomposition and formation of the tetracyclic ketone acetal 132 in good yield (Scheme 125). In general, five-membered ring formation in the construction of this type of polycyclic compound is necessarily stereocontrolled.

Treatment of diazo ester 133 with rhodium(II) mandelate in dichloromethane resulted in formation of the spiroenone 134 in 73% yield. Spiro enone 134 was then transformed into a tetracyclic C₁₄ ginkgolide 135 (Scheme 126).²⁹²

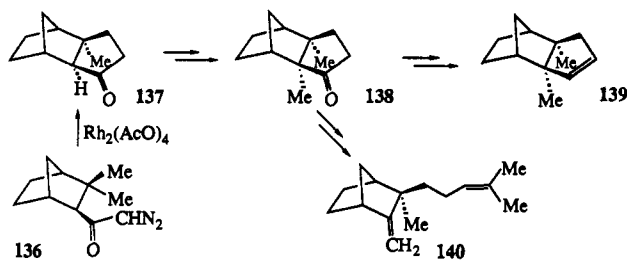
Catalytic decomposition of chiral diazo ketone 136 furnished the enantiomerically pure 137 in high yield. Further functional group manipulation furnished a key intermediate 138, which was converted to (+)-albine (139) and (-)- β -santalene (140, Scheme 127).²⁴¹

(\pm)-Tochuinyl acetate (143), recently isolated from the nudibranch *Tochuina tetraquetra*, was synthesized via a sequence in which the crucial step was the formation of a five-membered carbocycle, containing quaternary stereogenic centers via carbenoid C-H insertion.²⁷⁴ Treatment of diazo ester 141 with Rh(II) catalyst formed ester 142 which is the key intermediate leading to 143 (Scheme 128).

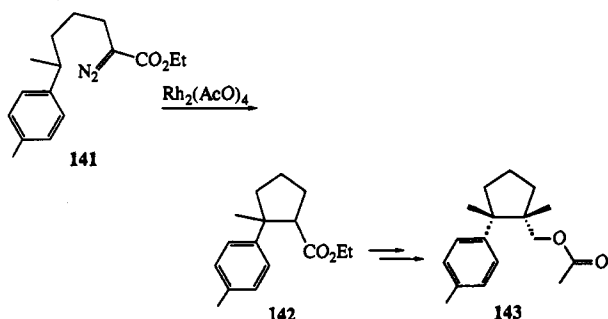
Scheme 126



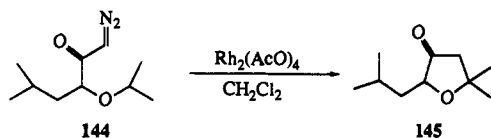
Scheme 127



Scheme 128



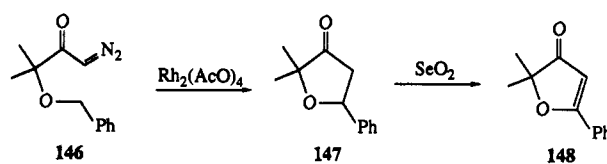
Scheme 129



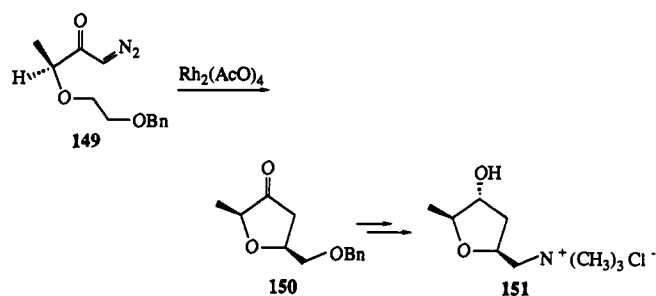
b. Five-Membered Heterocycles. It has been generally recognized^{1a} that carbenoid insertion into C-H bonds of heteroatomic compounds proceeds where possible, with a preference for insertion into the C-H bond α to the heteroatom. Adams and co-workers^{293,294} reported that the presence of an ether oxygen promotes this type of regioselectivity in carbenoid C-H insertion. The C-H bond adjacent to the ether oxygen is the preferred site of insertion compared to a normal "unactivated" aliphatic carbon-hydrogen bond. For example, rhodium acetate-catalyzed reaction of diazo ketone **144** afforded the corresponding furanone **145** as shown in Scheme 129. This type of reaction has been applied in the synthesis of bullatenone (**148**), a plant metabolite of *Myrtus bullata* (Scheme 130). Treatment of the alkoxy diazo ketone **146** with a rhodium(II) catalyst at room temperature in dichloromethane afforded the *cis*-enriched disubstituted furanone **147**, which was oxidized with SeO₂ to give **148**.

Carbenoid C-H insertion forming disubstituted 2,5-3(2*H*)-furanones exhibits a stereoselection favoring the

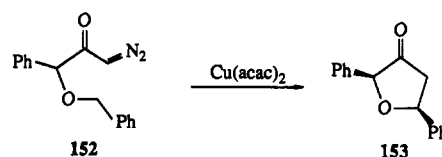
Scheme 130



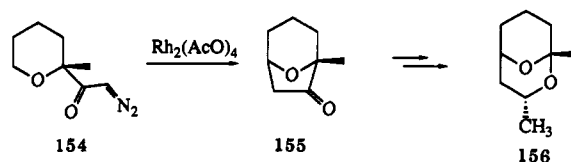
Scheme 131



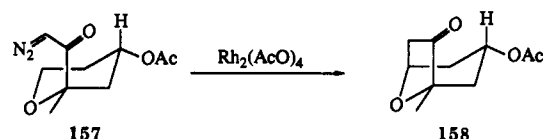
Scheme 132



Scheme 133



Scheme 134



cis isomers.²⁹⁴ For example, catalytic decomposition of diazo ketone **149** afforded *cis*-enriched disubstituted furanone **150**, which was then transformed into (+)-muscarine (**151**, Scheme 131).

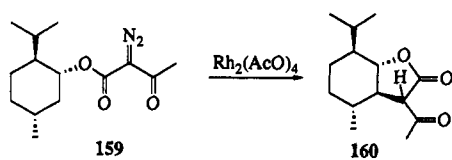
However, the reactivity and selectivity of this type of C-H insertion reaction for the construction of 3(2*H*)-furanones is dependent on the type of catalyst used. Hon and co-workers²⁹⁵ found that cupric acetylacetonate is the best catalyst for promotion of the C-H insertion reaction from the α -alkoxy- α' -diazo ketone **152**. Side reactions were minimized and the *cis* stereoisomer of the 3(2*H*)-furanone **153** was the favored product (Scheme 132).

endo-1,3-Dimethyl-2,9-dioxabicyclo[3.3.1]nonane (**156**), a pheromone isolated from Norwegian spruce, has been synthesized via a sequence in which the key step was C-H insertion α to an ether oxygen of **154**, forming the bridged bicycle **155** (Scheme 133).²⁹⁶

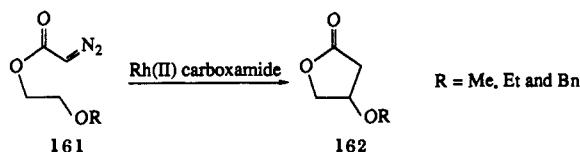
Stereoelectronic factors can also influence regioselectivity. For example, diazo ketone **157**, bearing two different α -C-H bonds, under catalytic decomposition afforded insertion product **158**, regioselectively (Scheme 134).²⁹⁷

Substituted γ -lactones can be obtained via the carbenoid C-H insertion reaction of corresponding

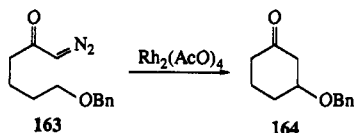
Scheme 135



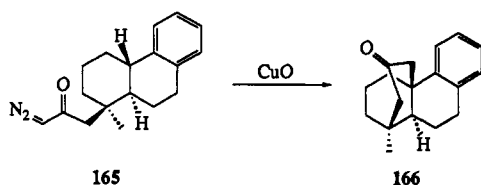
Scheme 136



Scheme 137



Scheme 138



α -diazo- β -keto esters^{275,298} or diazo esters.²⁹⁹ Thus treatment of α -diazo- β -keto ester **159** with a rhodium(II) catalyst afforded the bicyclic γ -lactone **160** in high yield and with a high degree of regiocontrol (Scheme 135).^{275,298} Similarly, treatment of diazo ester **161** with a rhodium(II) catalyst under reflux in dichloromethane provided the corresponding 3-substituted γ -butyrolactones **162** in moderate to high yields (Scheme 136).²⁹⁹

5. Six-Membered Ring Formation

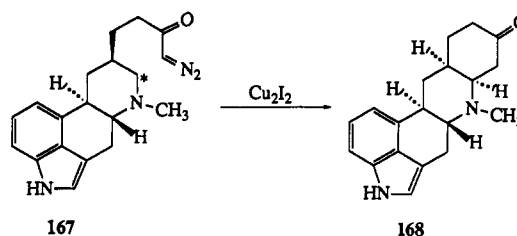
The regioselectivity of carbenoid C-H insertion strongly depends on the type of diazocarbonyl precursor. In certain circumstances, six-membered annulation can compete effectively with five-membered annulation.

a. Six-Membered Carbocycles. It is well known that the intramolecular C-H insertion of α -diazocarbonyl compounds into freely rotating aliphatic chains forms five-membered carbocycles. However, when a δ -carbon-hydrogen bond is activated by one adjacent heteroatom, the C-H insertion results in a six-membered ring. For example, catalytic decomposition of α -diazo ketone **163** afforded substituted cyclohexanone **164** as the major product (Scheme 137).²⁹³

The bridged bicyclo[3.3.1]nonanone system **166**, related to the insect attractant (\pm)-9a-carbomorphinan, was synthesized via an intramolecular C-H insertion process. Decomposition of diazo ketone **165** in a dilute cyclohexane-THF solvent system in the presence of an "activated CuO catalyst" under irradiation with a tungsten lamp gave the bridged ketone **166** (Scheme 138).³⁰⁰

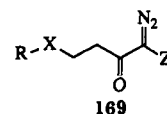
A key intermediate **168**, required for the synthesis of conformationally blocked ergoline derivatives, has been synthesized via intramolecular carbenoid C-H insertion.³⁰¹ Reaction of diazo ketone **167** in refluxing

Scheme 139



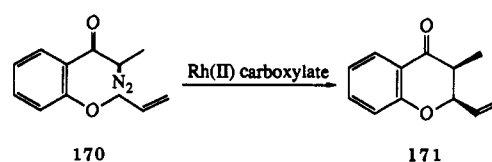
diethylene glycol dimethyl ether, catalyzed by Cu_2I_2 , gave **168**, which now possesses the additional D ring of the ergoline skeleton (Scheme 139). This cyclohexanone annulation can be explained by electronic effects. The starred C*-H bond adjacent to the basic nitrogen atom is activated, resulting in six-membered ring formation as the favored process. There is an antiperiplanar relationship between the N lone pair and the C*-H axial bond. This stereoelectronic requirement may be responsible for the preferred formation of the *cis*-fused ring. Basic nitrogen groups form complexes with rhodium(II) carboxylates and carboxamides rendering such catalysts unsuitable for the type of transformation shown in Scheme 139.

b. Six-Membered Heterocycles. It is known that when there is a heteroatom at the γ position of precursors of type **169**, the resulting catalytic decom-



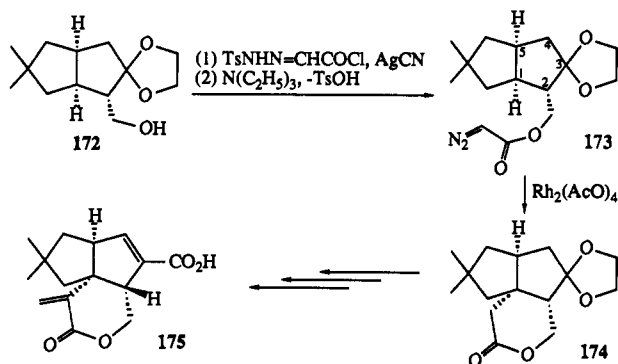
position products are generally produced via ylide formation (see section III.E). However, the regioselectivity of the carbenoid reaction strongly depends upon the type of diazocarbonyl precursor. This laboratory⁴¹ has reported the synthesis of six-membered oxygen heterocycles via the intramolecular C-H insertion reaction of α -diazo ketones catalyzed by rhodium(II) carboxylates. Decomposition of diazo ketone **170**, with rhodium(II) carboxylate in dichloromethane at 0 °C, furnished substituted chromanone **171** in 97% yield. The *cis*-fused disubstituted isomer was the major product (92%) (Scheme 140).

Scheme 140



Diazo acetate **173**, prepared from alcohol **172** according to House's method,^{70,71} in the presence of $\text{Rh}_2(\text{AcO})_4$ in an inert Freon solvent, undergoes an intramolecular carbenoid insertion at the adjacent C-1 bridgehead C-H bond to generate a δ -lactone ring of **174** in satisfactory yield. The δ -lactone **174** was then converted to pentalenolactone E (**175**)²⁴³ (Scheme 141). Two factors favor this key intramolecular C-H insertion process. Firstly, a tertiary C-H bond favors formation of the six-membered lactone via insertion. Secondly, competing insertion at C-2 to generate the γ -lactone

Scheme 141



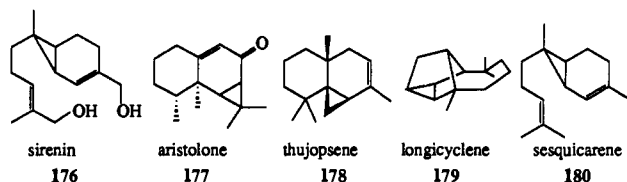
ring is disfavored due to steric effects, and insertion to C-5 leads to a seven-membered ring.

C. Cyclopropanation and Related Reactions

Due to their occurrence in natural products, biological significance, and synthetic utility, cyclopropanes have received considerable attention during the past several decades. Transition metal catalytic decomposition of diazocarbonyl compounds in the presence of alkenes provides a facile and powerful means of constructing cyclopropanes. The literature up to 1985 on intermolecular and intramolecular cyclopropanation, including mechanistic aspects and choice of catalysts, has been reviewed in detail by Maas.^{1b} In this section we will review recent applications of cyclopropanation and some of the subsequent ring cleavage reactions used in synthesis. The main emphasis will focus on the construction of natural products as well as other biologically active compounds.

1. Synthesis of Cyclopropane-Containing Products via Diazocarbonyl Intermediates

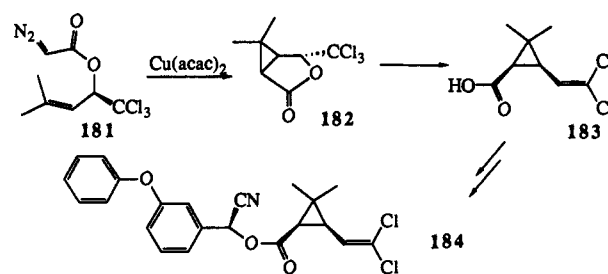
Many natural products which contain the cyclopropyl ring have been synthesized through reaction of a carbenoid with a carbon-carbon double bond. Some target molecules which were synthesized in this manner are sirenin (176), aristolone (177), thujopsene (178), longicyclene (179), and sesquicarene (180). This work



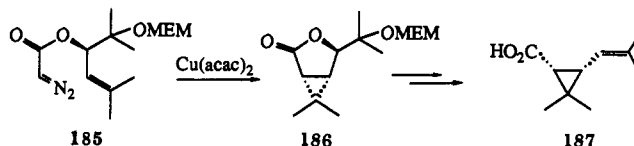
has been reviewed by Burke and Grieco.²⁶⁷ Hatch and Baum³⁰² have reported the total synthesis of the potent synthetic pyrethroid NRDC 182 (184), involving stereospecific carbenoid cyclopropanation as the key step. Treatment of the chiral diazo ester 181 with a copper catalyst resulted in the stereospecific formation of the bicyclic lactone 182. Cleavage of the bicyclic lactone 182 gave the permethrinic acid 183 which was then converted to 184 (Scheme 142).

Recently, Yadav and co-workers³⁰³ have used the same strategy in the synthesis of (1*R*)-*cis*-chrysanthemic acid (187) from (*R,R*)-tartaric acid. The crucial step was carbenoid cyclopropanation of the chiral diazo ester 185 to afford the optically active bicyclic lactone 186

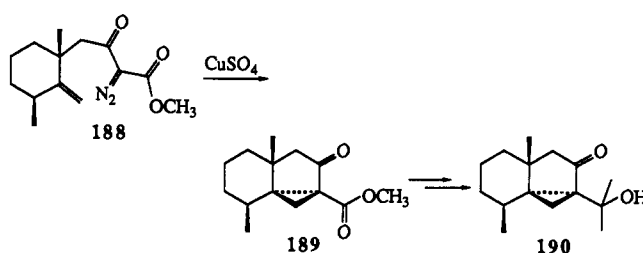
Scheme 142



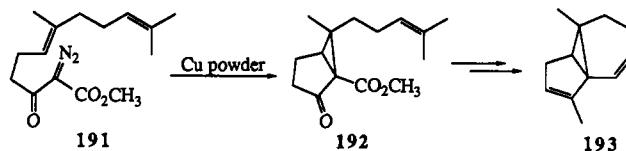
Scheme 143



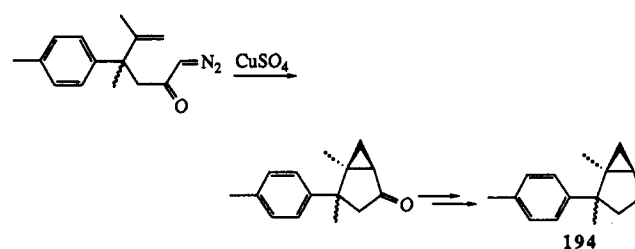
Scheme 144



Scheme 145



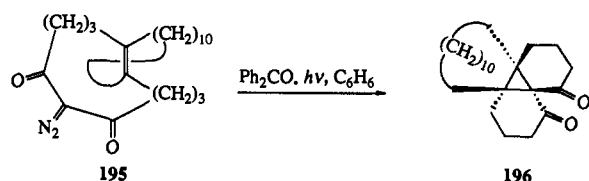
Scheme 146



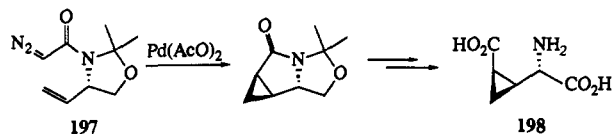
(Scheme 143). Both permethrinic acid (183) and chrysanthemic acid (187), are valuable precursors for the synthesis of pyrethroids.^{304,305} The tricyclic compound 189, which is the key intermediate for the total synthesis of the sesquiterpenoid (\pm)-cycloedesmol (190),³⁰⁶ was constructed via the catalytic decomposition of the α -diazo- β -keto ester 188 (Scheme 144). Similarly, the bicyclo[3.1.0]hexane derivative 192 was synthesized from the corresponding diazocarbonyl precursor 191 via the catalytic method and was converted into (\pm)-trinanastreptene 193 (Scheme 145).³⁰⁷

(\pm)-Cyclolaurene 194, isolated from the sea hare *Aplysia dactylomela*, has been synthesized via intramolecular cyclopropanation as the key step (Scheme 146).³⁰⁸ Fused polycyclic compounds, for example, *trans,cis,cis*-[10,4,4]triannulane-16,18-dione (196), can be prepared from an appropriate α -diazocarbonyl precursor, e.g. 195. Irradiation of 195 in benzene using

Scheme 147



Scheme 148



benzophenone as a photosensitizer produced 196 via transannular cyclopropanation (Scheme 147).³⁰⁹ α -(Carboxycyclopropyl)glycine (198), which has been isolated from the Spindaceae family by Fowden and co-workers,³¹⁰ was synthesized by Yamanoi and Ohfuné³¹¹ via a sequence which involved stereoselective carbenoid cyclopropanation of 197 (Scheme 148). Conformationally constrained analogues of L-glutamate^{311–314} and substituted cyclopropanes containing dipeptide mimics^{315–317} have also been synthesized via an inter- or intramolecular cyclopropanation.

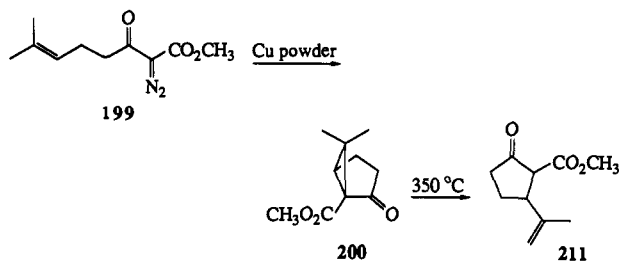
2. Cyclopropanation and Subsequent Reactions in Synthesis

Cyclopropane derivatives undergo a variety of ring-opening reactions. The use of cyclopropane derivatives as intermediates in organic synthesis has already been well established,^{318–325} and so it is not surprising that the carbenoid cyclopropanation, followed by ring-opening reactions, have become a valuable tool in the construction of many compounds other than those containing cyclopropanes. Some important examples taken from the literature to demonstrate the versatility of this synthetic strategy are shown below. These examples are roughly divided into three subsections according to the types of product derived from cyclopropyl ring fragmentation.

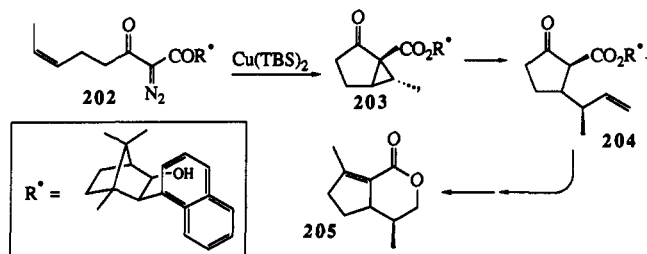
a. Construction of Monocyclic Systems via Cyclopropanation Followed by Ring Fragmentation. α -Diazocarbonyl precursors containing a freely rotating aliphatic chain with a carbon-carbon double bond in an appropriate position can undergo catalytic intramolecular cyclopropanation leading to five- or six-membered bicyclic systems. Fragmentation of the cyclopropyl ring can then lead to substituted monocyclic products. Trost and co-workers³²⁶ have reported a sequence involving the above strategy to construct substituted cyclopentanones. Catalytic decomposition of α -diazo- β -keto ester 199 afforded cyclopropyl ketone 200; thermolytic opening of 200 gave cyclopentanone 201 (Scheme 149). Intramolecular cyclopropanation of the chiral α -diazo- β -keto ester 202 proceeded to bicyclic keto ester 203 with a diastereomeric excess of 60%.³²⁷ Treatment of enantiomerically pure 203 with lithium divinylcuprate furnished 204, which, following further synthetic modification, led to (+)-isoneonepetalactone (205), a constituent of the essential oil of *Actinidia polygama* (Scheme 150).³²⁷

Intramolecular cyclopropanation of dienoid diazo ketone 206 resulted in the formation of *cis*-methylvinylcyclopropane 207 which underwent a controlled

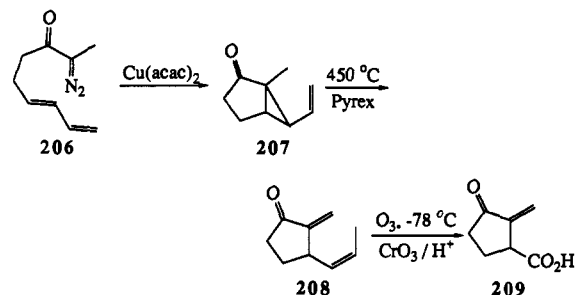
Scheme 149



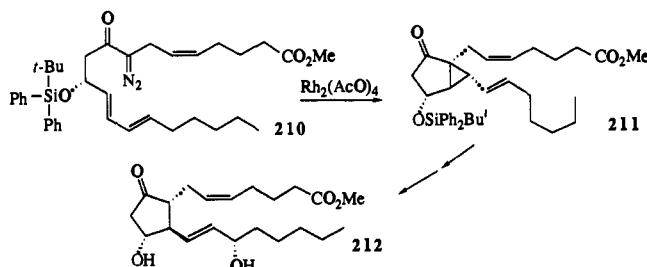
Scheme 150



Scheme 151



Scheme 152



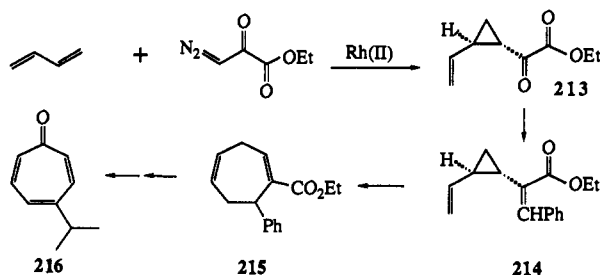
pyrolysis to afford enone 208.³²⁸ Selective ozonolysis of enone 208 leads to antibiotic (\pm)-sarkomycin (209, Scheme 151).³²⁹

Prostaglandin E₂ methyl ester (212) has been synthesized via a sequence involving an intramolecular cyclopropanation process. Thus, treatment of diazocarbonyl precursor 210 with rhodium(II) acetate in dichloromethane furnished the bicyclic adduct 211, which was then transformed into 212 (Scheme 152).³³⁰

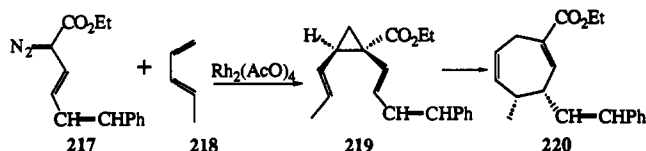
Intermolecular cyclopropanation and subsequent ring fragmentation has also been employed in the synthesis of monocyclic compounds. Rhodium(II)-catalyzed reaction of 1,3-butadiene with ethyl 3-diazopyruvate leads to acylcyclopropane 213 which with a Wittig reagent gave 214; Cope rearrangement of 214 afforded cycloheptadienecarboxylate 215, which was then transformed to nezukone (216, Scheme 153).³³¹

The Cope rearrangement of divinylcyclopropanes has been extensively used for the synthesis of seven-membered cyclic compounds. Davies and co-workers³³²

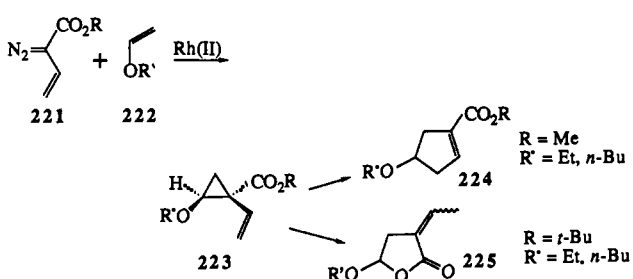
Scheme 153



Scheme 154



Scheme 155

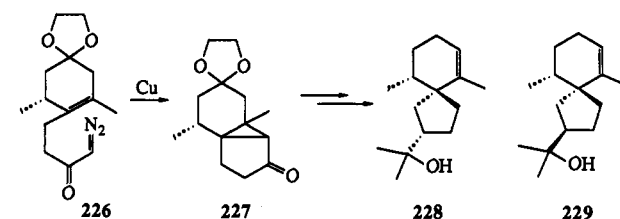


have reported the stereoselective synthesis of the substituted seven-membered carbocycle **220** via a sequence involving the tandem cyclopropanation/Cope rearrangement. Addition of unsaturated diazocarbonyl compound **217** to acyclic diene **218** generated divinylcyclopropane **219**, which then undergoes Cope rearrangement to afford **220** (Scheme 154). Rhodium(II)-catalyzed decomposition of vinyl diazo ester **221** in the presence of vinyl ether **222** gave the cyclopropane carboxylate **223**. The cleavage of the cyclopropyl ring of **223** resulted in a five-membered carbocyclic compound **224** or lactone **225**. The rearrangement chemistry of **223** is highly dependent on the presence of the ester functionality (Scheme 155).^{333,334}

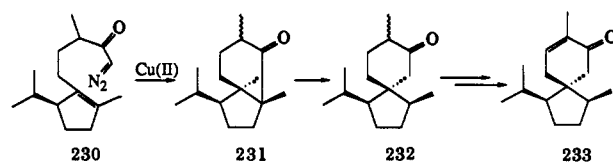
b. Construction of Spiro Frameworks via Cyclopropanation Followed by Ring Fragmentation. Products of intramolecular addition of a diazocarbonyl to a cyclic olefin can undergo cleavage of the exterior cyclopropane bond to produce a spiro framework. This synthetic strategy has been used as a key step in the construction of a number of naturally occurring spiro sesquiterpenes. An elegant application of this spiro framework formation protocol, which led to the total synthesis of (\pm)-hinesol (**228**) and (\pm)-epihinesol (**229**), was achieved by Deslongchamps and co-workers³³⁵ (Scheme 156). Catalytic decomposition of ketal diazo ketone **226** gave tricyclic ketal ketone **227**. Functional group manipulation involving the opening of the cyclopropyl ring furnished **228** and **229**.

The spiroannulation process has also been investigated by White and co-workers.³³⁶ Applications include the stereocontrolled synthesis of (–)-acorenone B (**233**) and (\pm)- α -chamigrene (**237**) (Schemes 157 and 158).³³⁷ Catalytic intramolecular cyclopropanation of diazo ketones **230** and **234** led to the corresponding tricyclic

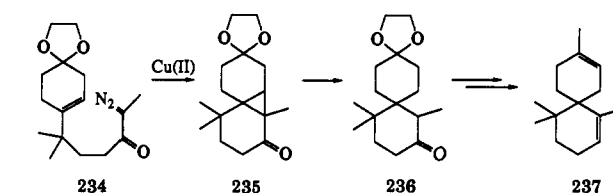
Scheme 156



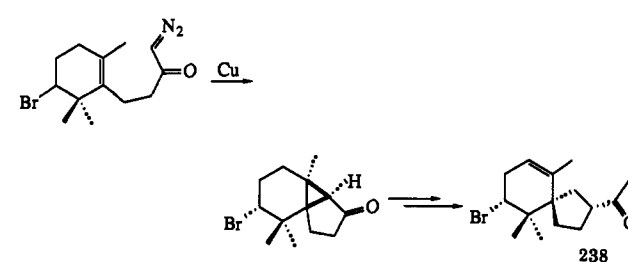
Scheme 157



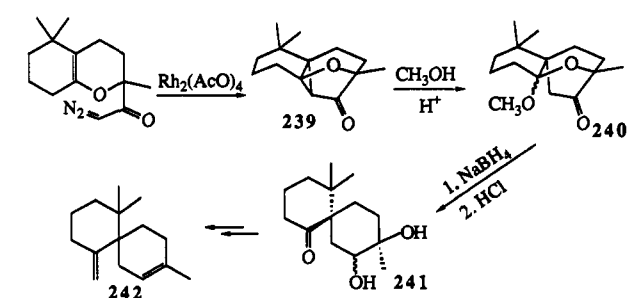
Scheme 158



Scheme 159



Scheme 160

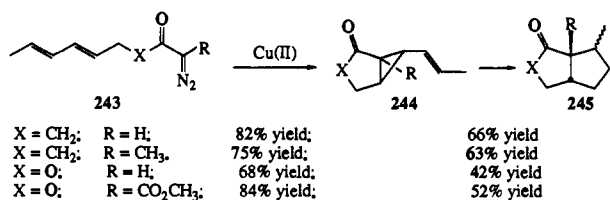


ketones **231** and **235**. Cleavage of the cyclopropyl ring led to the spirocyclic ketones **232** and **236** which were then transformed into **233** and **237**, respectively.

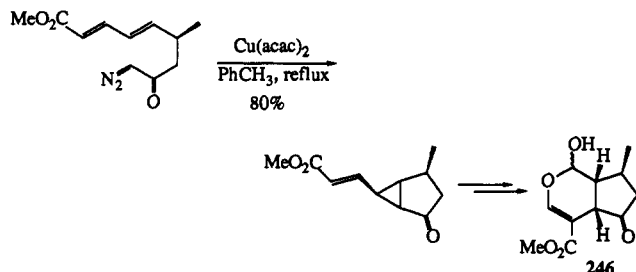
(\pm)-Spirolaurenone (**238**), an antifungal compound isolated from the red alga *Laurencia glandulifera*, has been synthesized via the same spiroannulation strategy involving carbenoid cyclopropanation–fragmentation (Scheme 159).³³⁸ The transannular cyclopropanation of a keto carbenoid to a bicyclic dihydropyran nucleus generated by rhodium(II) catalysis provided a key oxa tricyclic keto intermediate **239** for the construction of the [6.6]-spirocyclic skeleton. Regiospecific cleavage of cyclopropane **240** followed by hydrolytic cleavage of the C–O bond provided spirocyclic **241**, which was then transformed to β -chamigrene (**242**, Scheme 160).³³⁹

c. Construction of Fused and Bridged Polycyclic Systems via Cyclopropanation Followed by Ring Fragmentation. Metal-catalyzed decomposition of

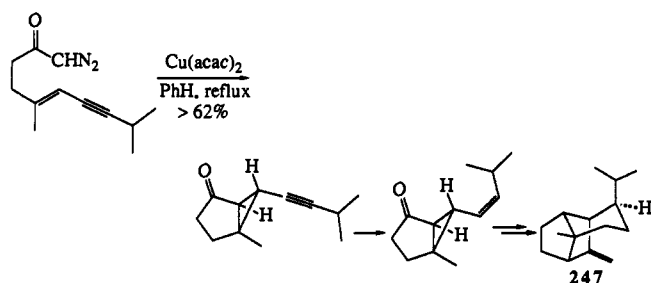
Scheme 161



Scheme 162



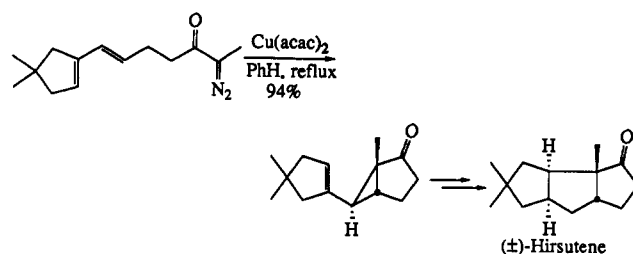
Scheme 163



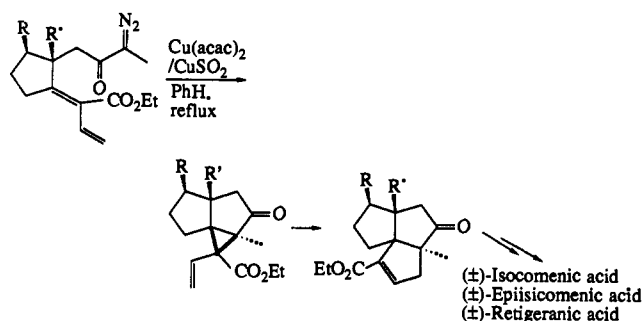
dienic diazocarbonyls gives vinyl cyclopropanes, pyrolysis of which results in cyclopentene annulation. The cyclopropanation step is ring-size dependent, and only closures of five- and six-membered rings prove synthetically useful. $\text{Cu}(\text{acac})_2$ -catalyzed decomposition of diazocarbonyl 243 furnished vinyl cyclopropane 244 in high yield. Rearrangement of vinyl cyclopropane 244 produced bicyclic adduct 245 (Scheme 161).³⁴⁰⁻³⁴³ An interesting application of this method is found as a step in a synthetic entry to (-)-verbenalol (246, Scheme 162).³⁴⁴ A further example is found in a synthesis of (\pm)-sinularene 247 where the vinyl cyclopropane was again obtained via copper catalysis. In this case, the diazo ketone bears a carbon-carbon triple bond as a masked *cis* double bond which meets the requirement for further stereocontrolled rearrangement (Scheme 163).³⁴⁵

When the diene function is attached to, or is part of, a carbocyclic system, the vinyl cyclopropanation formation and rearrangement affords a reliable approach to the formation of tricyclic carbocycles. Some elegant demonstrations of the use of this methodology in the total synthesis of fused cyclopentanoid terpenes come from the research of Hudlicky and co-workers.^{341,346-352} (\pm)-Hirsutene,³⁴⁶ (\pm)-isocomenic acid,³⁴⁷ (\pm)-epiisocomenic acid,³⁴⁷ (\pm)-epiisocomene,³⁴⁸ pentalenic acid,^{349,350} pentalenene,^{349,350} and retigeranic acid^{351,352} have been successfully synthesized via sequences involving the cyclopropanation-cyclopentene annulation protocol (Schemes 164-167). In the cases where these diazo ketones contain a carboxylate-substituted double bond of a diene, the promotion of effective intramolecular cyclopropanation requires the combination of $\text{CuSO}_4/\text{Cu}(\text{acac})_2$ as catalyst.

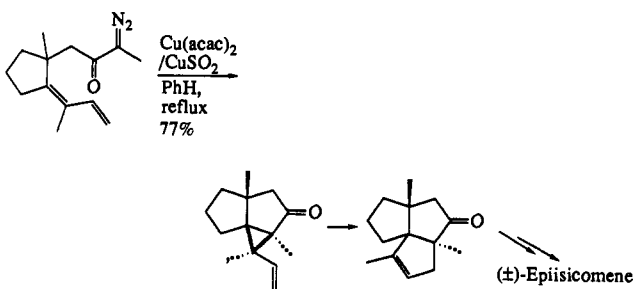
Scheme 164



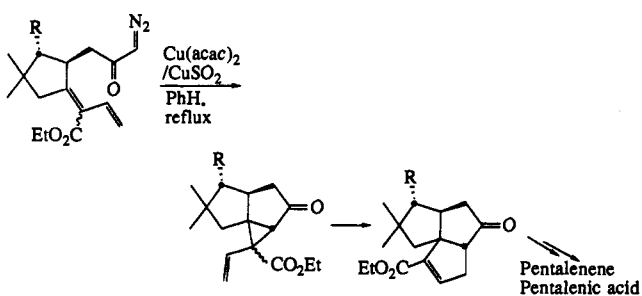
Scheme 165



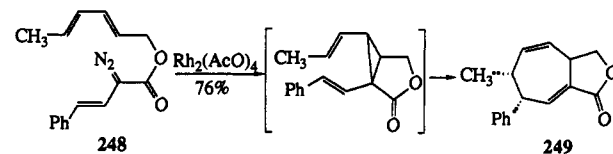
Scheme 166



Scheme 167

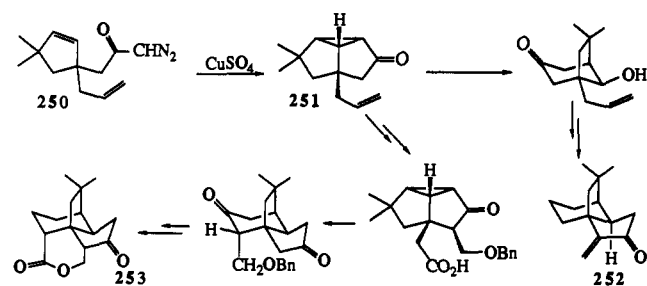


Scheme 168

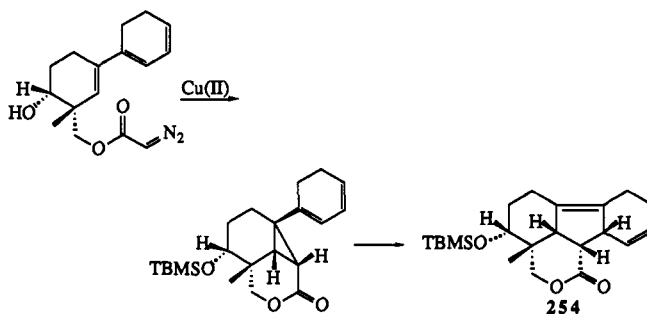


Divinylcyclopropanes, which can be generated by the intramolecular cyclopropanation of diazocarbonyl precursors, undergo a Cope rearrangement leading to the formation of fused seven-membered rings. For example, decomposition of the *2E,4E*-diene 248 by rhodium(II) acetate in refluxing dichloromethane resulted in the formation of a fused cycloheptadiene 249 (Scheme 168).³⁵³ The scope and stereochemistry of this sequence has been extensively studied by Davies and co-workers.^{332,353,354}

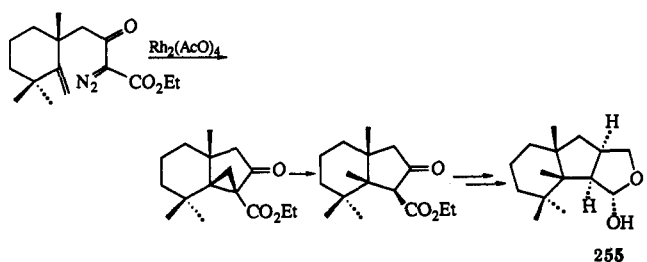
Scheme 169



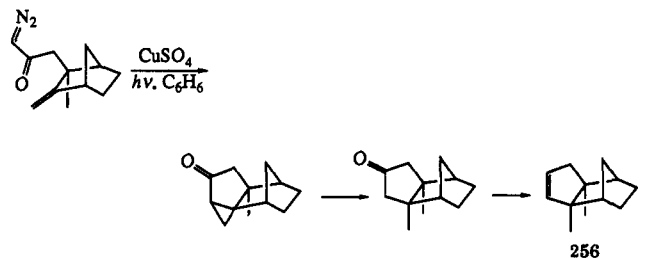
Scheme 170



Scheme 171



Scheme 172



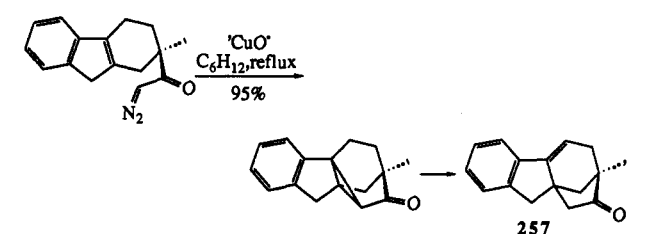
Both (\pm)-quadrone³⁶⁵ (253) and (\pm)-descarboxy-quadrone³⁶⁶ (252) have been synthesized via a key intermediate tricyclo[3.3.0.0^{2,8}]octan-3-one 251 which was derived from an intramolecular cyclopropanation of diazocarbonyl precursor 250 (Scheme 169).

Antheridic acid, the antheridium-inducing factor of the fern *Anemia phyllitidis*, has been synthesized via a stereocontrolled and enantioselective process.³⁶⁷⁻³⁶⁹ The key intermediate 254 was constructed via a sequence involving an intramolecular cyclopropanation followed by a vinylcyclopropane-cyclopentene rearrangement (Scheme 170).

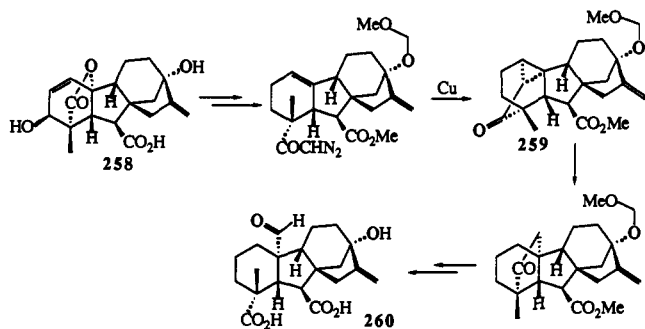
Intramolecular cyclopropanation of a γ,δ -unsaturated diazo ketone with subsequent cleavage of the cyclopropane ring has been used as the key step in the total synthesis of thapsane (255)³⁶⁰ and (\pm)-albene (256)³⁶¹ (Schemes 171 and 172).

The intramolecular cyclopropanation of appropriate γ,δ -unsaturated α -diazocarbonyl compounds followed by stereo-

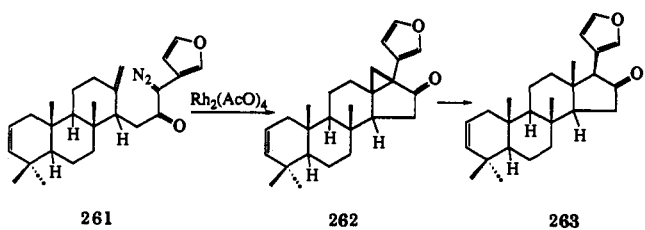
Scheme 173



Scheme 174



Scheme 175



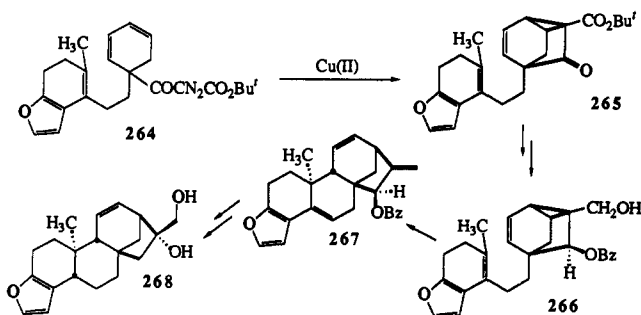
selective catalytic reduction of the cyclopropyl ketone provided a useful approach in diterpenoid synthesis. Some bridged tetracyclic compounds, for example gibberenes 257, have been synthesized *via* this strategy (Scheme 173).³⁸²

The intramolecular cyclopropanation of a diazo ketone derived from gibberellic acid (258), followed by reductive cleavage of the cyclopropyl group in 259 has been used as the key step in Mander's stereocontrolled synthesis of gibberellin A₁₉ (260, Scheme 174).³⁶³ Similarly, two C₂₀ gibberellins, A₃₆ and A₃₇, have also been synthesized via a sequence involving the cyclopropanation-reductive cleavage approach.³⁶⁴

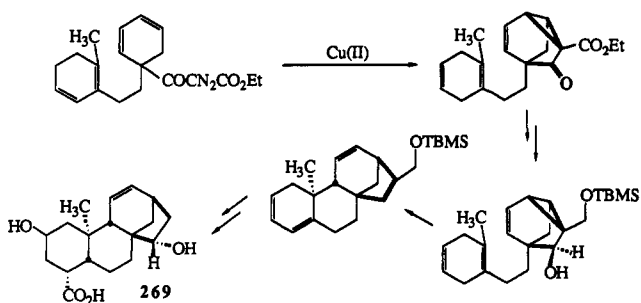
The 13-*epi*-limonoid skeleton 263 has been synthesized via a sequence shown in Scheme 175. Rhodium(II) acetate-catalyzed decomposition of the diazocarbonyl 261 proceeded selectively to cyclopropyl ketone 262, which was converted cleanly to 263 by lithium-ammonium reduction.³⁶⁵

Two elegant examples of the application of the selective carbenoid cyclopropanation were used by Corey in the total synthesis of (\pm)-cafestol (268)³⁶⁶ and (\pm)-atractyligenin (269).³⁶⁷ Copper-catalyzed decomposition of diazo ketone 264 gave cyclopropyl keto ester 265. The cyclopropyl keto ester 265 was converted to alcohol 266 in two further steps. Cyclization of 266 to pentacycle 267 leads to the required ring system directly and stereoselectively. The pentacycle 267 was functionalized to give (\pm)-cafestol 268 (Scheme 176). This synthetic strategy was further employed in the total synthesis of (\pm)-atractyligenin (269, Scheme 177).

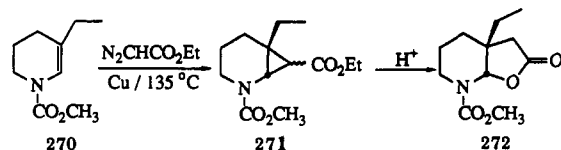
Scheme 176



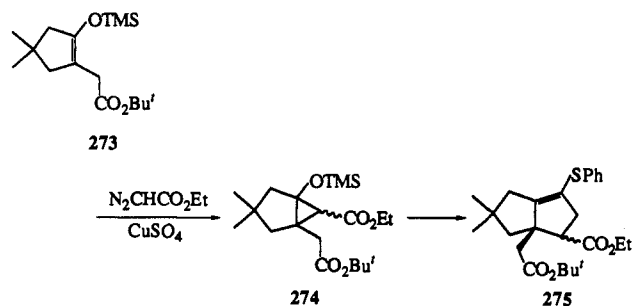
Scheme 177



Scheme 178



Scheme 179



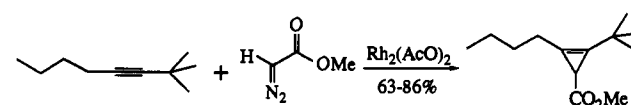
Intermolecular cyclopropanation of enamide **270** using ethyl diazoacetate gave cyclopropane **271**. Acid-catalyzed ring opening of **271** afforded lactone **272** which was the key intermediate of the synthesis of eburnamone and of dehydroaspidofermidine (Scheme 178).³⁶⁸

Marino and co-workers³⁶⁹ applied the carbenoid cyclopropanation followed by a cyclopentaannulation reaction in the total synthesis of pentalenolactone **E** methyl ester. Thus, treatment of trimethylsilyl enol ether **273** with ethyl diazoacetate gave the (silyloxy) cyclopropane **274**, which was then fragmented to afford the key bicyclo[3.3.0]octene **275** (Scheme 179). Further chemical manipulation completed the total synthesis.

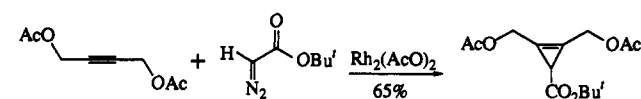
3. Cyclopropanation of Alkynes and Related Reactions

Early studies by Doering and Pomerantz³⁷⁰ established that methyl diazoacetate adds to 2-butyne photolytically to furnish a cyclopropene adduct. Metal-catalyzed decomposition of diazo esters in the presence

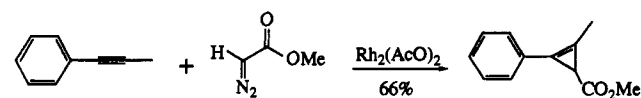
Scheme 180



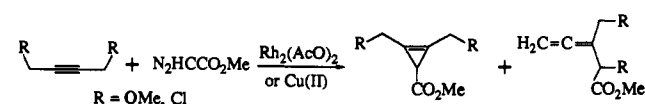
Scheme 181



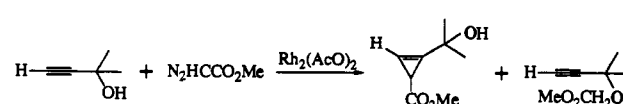
Scheme 182



Scheme 183



Scheme 184

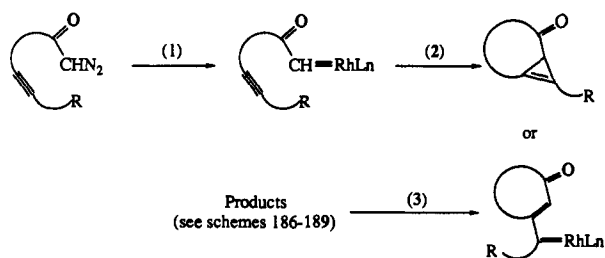


of alkynes is now the preferred route to cyclopropenecarboxylates.^{1b,371} Rhodium(II) carboxylates are the catalysts of choice, having largely replaced traditional copper catalysts which often required higher temperatures thereby exposing the primary reaction products to thermal or catalytic ring opening. Bicyclobutanes, arising from cyclopropanation of the product cyclopropenes, are infrequently formed and usually in very low yields.³⁷² A few representative examples of intermolecular cyclopropanation are shown in Schemes 180–182.^{68,373–375} For examples of asymmetric cyclopropanation using chiral rhodium(II) catalysts see section III.L.

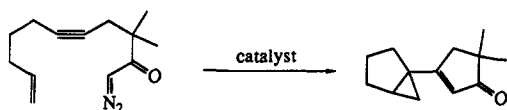
Functionalized alkynes may also undergo cyclopropanation, although depending on the nature of the additional groups in the substrate, other product types are possible. For example, ylide-derived minor products may arise with propargyl chlorides and ethers (Scheme 183),^{93,376} and O–H insertion competes with cyclopropanation with propargyl alcohols as substrates (Scheme 184).⁹³

There is a growing number of mechanistically complex, intramolecular reactions of α -diazocarbonyls containing suitably positioned alkyne functions which show great potential for the construction of polycyclic molecules from acyclic precursors. These catalyzed reactions, which come largely from the work of Hoyer³⁷⁷ and Padwa^{1b} and their co-workers, are believed to be initiated by formation of a metal carbene from the diazocarbonyl group in the usual way (Scheme 185, step 1). There follows addition to the alkyne to produce a vinyl carbenoid directly via insertion or indirectly via a highly strained cyclopropene intermediate (step 2). The vinyl carbenoid can then proceed intramolecularly to products which depend on its structure and immediate environment or intermolecularly by reaction with external carbenophiles (step 3). Although most

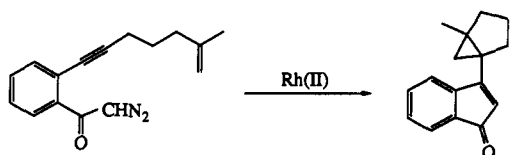
Scheme 185



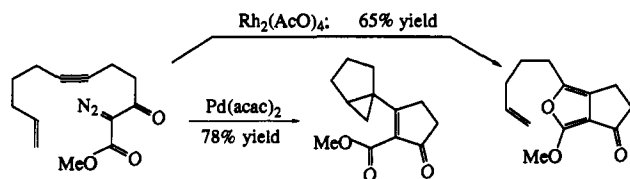
Scheme 186



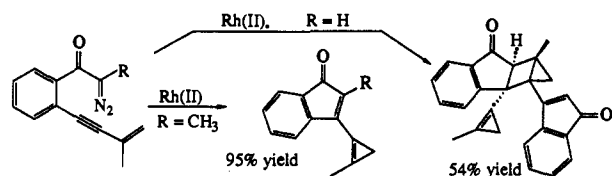
Scheme 187



Scheme 188



Scheme 189

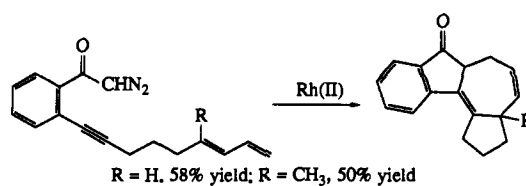


studies are based on rhodium(II) catalysis, Hoye's work shows that product types and yields are very metal dependent, emphasizing that metalated species are involved in product-determining steps.³⁷⁷

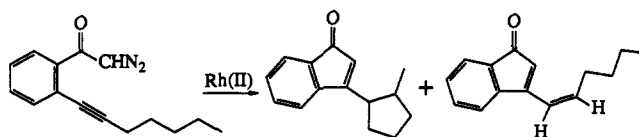
Of the various intramolecular processes open to the putative vinyl carbenoid intermediate in Scheme 185, that of cyclopropanation of a distal double bond in the side chain has proved to be especially effective. Typical examples are shown in Schemes 186³⁷⁷ and 187.³⁷⁸ The behavior of the substrate in Scheme 188³⁷⁷ illustrates the catalyst dependence of the fate of the vinyl carbenoid, whereas use of $\text{Pd}(\text{acac})_2$ leads to efficient cyclopropanation of the distal double bond, $\text{Rh}_2(\text{AcO})_4$ catalyzes the formation of a fused furan system, presumably from interception of the vinyl carbenoid by the ester carbonyl oxygen atom. When the alkene trap is placed adjacent to the carbenoid carbon atom, as should be the case with the precursor in Scheme 189,³⁷⁹ the product of its participation is now a vinylcyclopropene which, in the case in hand, with $\text{R} = \text{CH}_3$ was isolable, although in the related case with $\text{R} = \text{H}$ the product isolated was a dimer derived from a [2+2] cycloaddition process.³⁷⁹

Yet another variation is possible when the side chain contains a butadiene moiety with the *E* geometry shown in Scheme 190.³⁷⁸ Here internal cyclopropanation

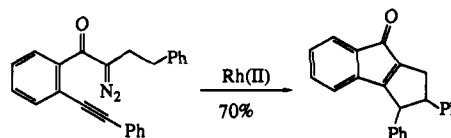
Scheme 190



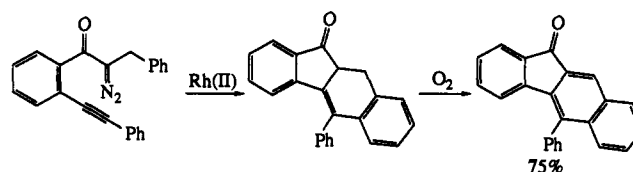
Scheme 191



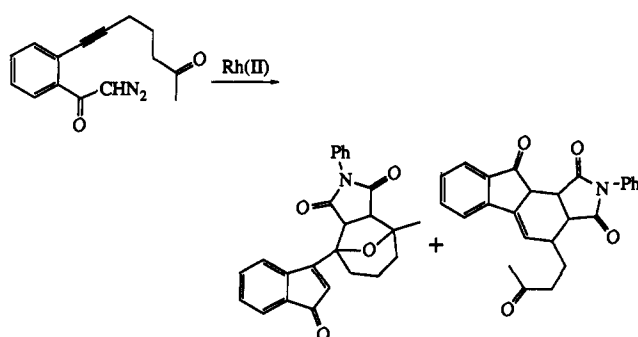
Scheme 192



Scheme 193



Scheme 194

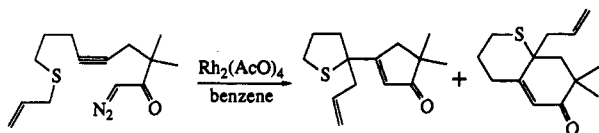


produces a divinylcyclopropane with the correct stereochemistry for Cope rearrangement and the ultimate products are the fused cycloheptatrienes ($\text{R} = \text{H}$ and $\text{R} = \text{CH}_3$). With simple alkyl side chains as in Scheme 191,³⁸⁰ the vinyl carbenoid formed on cyclization of the alkyne exhibits characteristic behavior, viz. 1,2-hydrogen shift to form a diene and C-H insertion to form a cyclopentane ring.

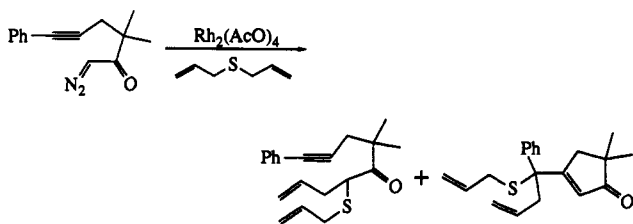
Intramolecular C-H insertion is the preponderant mode of reaction in the example in Scheme 192³⁸¹ where formation of the cyclopentane ring results from insertion into the benzylic bond. Intramolecular trapping with an aromatic ring suitably located in the side chain is also possible. For example, treatment of the diazo ketone in Scheme 193³⁸¹ with rhodium(II) acetate furnished the tetracyclic ketone shown, attack by the vinyl carbenoid on the distal benzene ring completing the formation of three new fused rings; the primary reaction product was easily oxidized by air to the fully aromatized system.

The behavior of the diazo ketones in Schemes 194³⁷⁸ and 195³⁸² on exposure to rhodium(II) acetate dem-

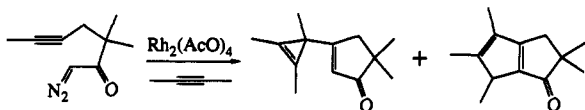
Scheme 195



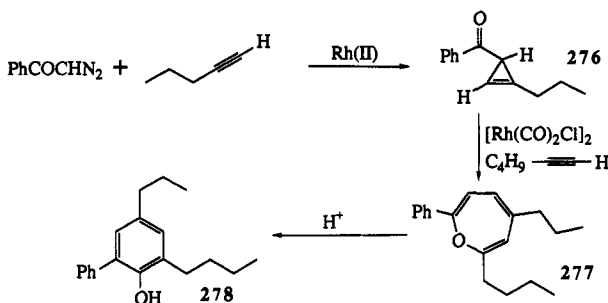
Scheme 196



Scheme 197



Scheme 198



onstrates that vinyl carbenoids are also vulnerable to trapping by heteroatoms. In Scheme 194, a neighboring carbonyl group sequesters the carbenoid in a carbonyl ylide which can be trapped externally in a cycloaddition reaction with *N*-phenylmaleimide. The second product probably results from capture, by *N*-phenylmaleimide, of a diene formed by a 1,2-hydrogen shift in the vinyl carbenoid. In Scheme 195, an allyl sulfide moiety acts as the intramolecular trap for the vinyl carbenoid and the resulting sulfonium ylide undergoes sigmatropic rearrangement to furnish the sulfur heterocycles shown.

Hoye and Dinsmore³⁸² have extended the chemistry illustrated in Scheme 195³⁸² to include the combination of intramolecular formation of a vinyl carbenoid with intermolecular trapping by an external reagent to include diazo ketone decomposition in the presence of diallyl sulfide, as for example in Scheme 196.³⁸² Here the rhodium(II)-induced bimolecular alkyne insertion-allyl sulfonium ylide rearrangement proceeds efficiently to give γ -allylthio cyclic enones. These workers also demonstrated that when the acetylenic diazo ketone shown in Scheme 197³⁸³ was treated with rhodium(II) acetate in the presence of 2-butyne a double alkyne insertion occurred. Subsequent catalytic ring opening, also brought about by rhodium(II), furnished the dihydropentalenone shown. Padwa and Xu³⁶⁴ have developed a new phenol synthesis which combines the use of diazo ketone-derived vinyl carbenoids with terminal alkynes. Thus the precursor for the rhodium vinyl carbenoids was prepared by treating α -diazo benzoyl ketone (Scheme 198) with a terminal alkyne.

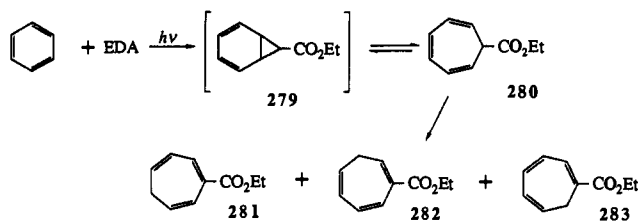
The resulting cyclopropene **276** was allowed to react with another terminal alkyne in the presence of 10 mol % of tetracarbonyldichlorodirhodium to produce oxepin (**277**). Treatment of **277** with a catalytic amount of hydrochloric acid completed the transformation to the phenol **278**. A typical example is shown in the Scheme 198.

D. Reactions with Aromatics

1. Benzene and Its Derivatives

Shortly after Curtius announced his synthesis of ethyl diazoacetate (EDA) in 1893,² Buchner commenced an investigation of its reactions with alkenes, alkynes, and aromatics that was to continue for 30 or more years.³⁸⁵⁻³⁹⁹ Initially, Buchner believed that thermal decomposition of EDA in benzene furnished a single product to which he assigned the norcaradiene structure, although he was later to discover that hydrolysis of the product yielded a mixture of four isomeric carboxylic acids. The norcaradiene formulation persisted until the 1950s when Doering reexamined the reaction.⁴⁰⁰ We now know that the Buchner reaction in its original form produces four cycloheptatrienyl esters **280-283** in Scheme 199.⁴⁰⁰

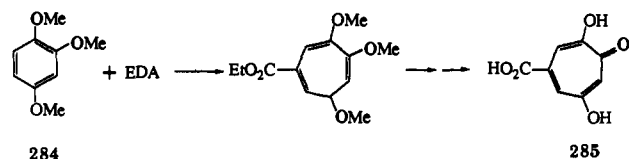
Scheme 199



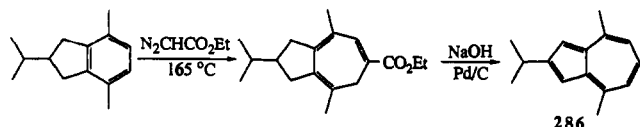
Photochemically, the reaction behaves in much the same way. The contemporary interpretation of both processes is that carbethoxycarbene addition to benzene proceeds via an unstable norcaradiene intermediate **279** which is in mobile equilibrium with the more stable cycloheptatriene tautomer **280**; the remaining products, **281-283**, are isomers of **280** formed by thermally or photochemically induced sigmatropic rearrangement.

Much of the early work on thermal or photochemical Buchner reactions was characterized by the isolation of complex mixtures of cycloheptatrienyl esters which usually were neither separated nor individually identified. Toluene and EDA produce three ring-expanded products,⁴⁰¹ and a recent reinvestigation of the reaction with anisole revealed the formation of seven products.⁴⁰² Low yields and separation problems notwithstanding, the original Buchner reaction represented a singularly direct route to a vast range of seven-membered carbocycles many of which, as mixtures of isomers, were suitable for further elaboration into natural products and unnatural azulenes. The relationship between the anisole-EDA reaction and tropone derivatives was first recognized by Johnson and co-workers⁴⁰³ who used it as a model for their synthesis of stitipatic acid (**285**) from 1,2,4-trimethoxybenzene (**284**, Scheme 200); for convenience only the cycloheptatriene ester appropriate to the synthesis is shown. Application of the Buchner reaction to bi- and tricyclic aromatics opened up new routes to condensed cycloheptatrienyl systems which were often transformed through decarboxylation-dehydrogenation into azulenes. A typical sequence leading to vetivazulene **286** is shown in Scheme 201.⁴⁰⁴

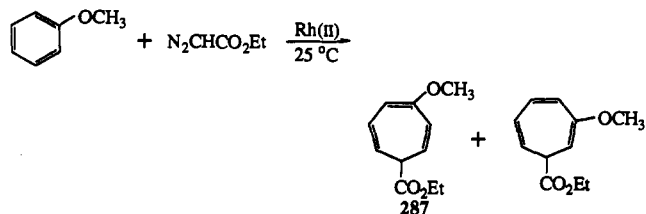
Scheme 200



Scheme 201



Scheme 202



The problems endemic to the thermal and photochemical reactions were solved comprehensively in 1980 when the Belgian group extended their study of rhodium catalysis of diazocarbonyl reactions to include the Buchner process.^{89,91} The measure of improvement can be quickly appreciated by comparing the thermal reaction of EDA with anisole (seven products, 35% yield) with its rhodium trifluoroacetate-catalyzed counterpart (two products, 73% yield, Scheme 202). And although the methoxy substituent clearly exerts a directive effect in favor of the 4-isomer 287, both products of the latter (room temperature) reaction are kinetically controlled unconjugated esters, neither of which was even detected in the thermal reaction.

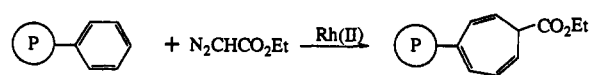
In general, rhodium(II)-catalyzed decomposition of alkyl diazoacetates in a large excess of aromatic substrate at room temperature produces kinetically controlled cycloheptatrienyl esters in excellent yield; a summary of the behavior of several aromatics with EDA is shown in Table 3.^{89,91} The regioselectivities observed among isomeric products have been interpreted in terms of attack by a highly electrophilic rhodium carbenoid on the aromatic ring, yield being highest with electron-rich substrates. The catalyzed reaction of EDA with polystyrene (Scheme 203) represents an interesting extension of the Buchner process to the formation of a cycloheptatriene polymer.⁸⁹ Cycloaddition of diazo ketones and aromatics is also known. A useful additional feature of the ketone series is that the cycloheptatrienes produced are susceptible to ready ring contraction to benzene ketones in the presence of trifluoroacetic acid (Scheme 204);⁴⁰⁵ in some cases aromatization occurs spontaneously. The combination of these two processes has been used to synthesize optically pure α-substituted benzyl ketones from diazo ketones derived from homochiral α-amino acids and α-chloropropionic acid. Illustrative examples are shown in Scheme 205.¹⁵⁰

Only a few examples of intramolecular Buchner reactions were known prior to the introduction of rhodium catalyst. All employed copper in one form or another, and although yields of ring-expanded bicyclic

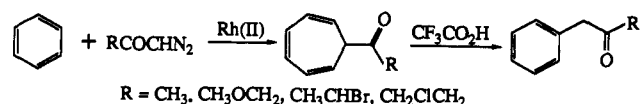
Table 3. Reactions of Ethyl Diazoacetate with Aromatics

Precursor	Products
	100%
	56% 23% 17%
	43% 39% 18%
	85% 10%
	5% 15% 80%
	8% 12% 80%

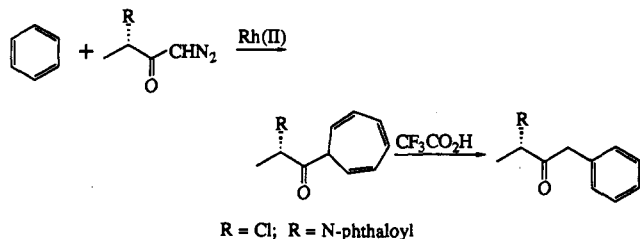
Scheme 203



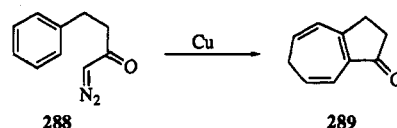
Scheme 204



Scheme 205



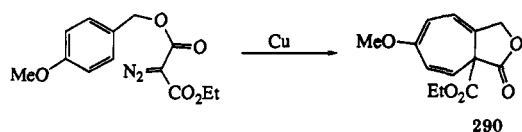
Scheme 206



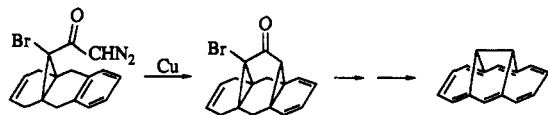
products were low, the process was recognized as a potentially useful route to a variety of novel structures. Cyclization of 1-diazo-4-phenylbutan-2-one (288) with a copper catalyst in hot decalin furnished a mixture of products from which azulene (289) was isolated in 13% yield (Scheme 206).⁴⁰⁶ Benzyl diazomalonate, on the other hand, produced bicyclic lactone 290 in 60% yield,⁴⁰⁷ movement of the double bonds in 290 being prevented by the bridgehead substituent (Scheme 207). Vogel employed copper powder in refluxing benzene to produce the bridged annulene shown in Scheme 208.⁴⁰⁸

We now return to the parent system. Clearly, trienone 289 is the result of sigmatropic shifts within the cycloheptatrienyl system. Scott reinvestigated the reaction at lower temperatures and detected by ¹H

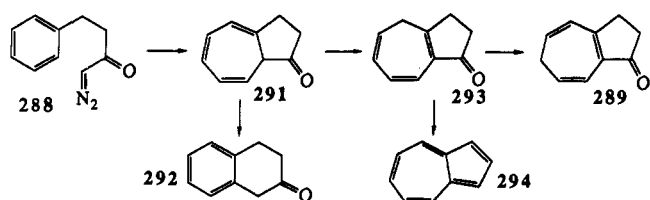
Scheme 207



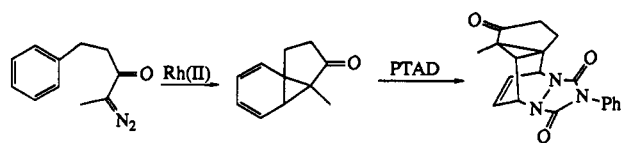
Scheme 208



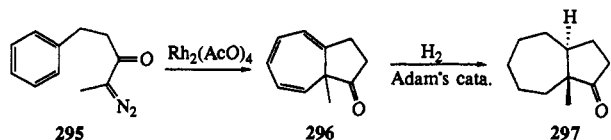
Scheme 209



Scheme 210



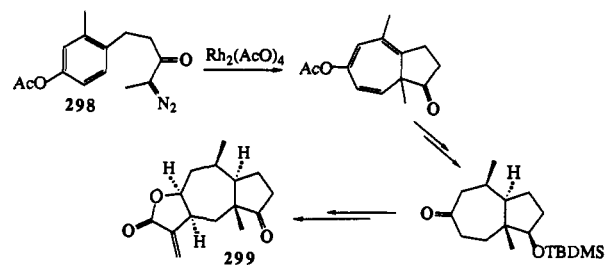
Scheme 211



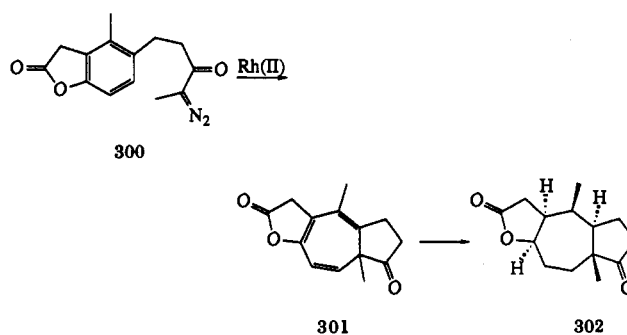
NMR the kinetically formed trienone 291, but this isomer was transformed into the more conjugated trienone 293 during the isolation procedure.⁴⁰⁹⁻⁴¹¹ Dehydration of 293 with phosphorus pentoxide in methanesulfonic acid produced azulene (294) to complete a synthesis which Scott later demonstrated was ideally suited to the production of ¹³C labeled azulenes.^{410,411} The kinetically controlled trienone 291 was finally uncovered by rhodium catalysis for when diazo ketone 288 was exposed to rhodium(II) acetate in dichloromethane at room temperature 291 was the only trienone isolated in 95% yield.^{412,413} With triethylamine catalysis, 291 isomerized to Scott's trienone 293. In contrast, trifluoroacetic acid caused 291 to rearrange quantitatively to 2-tetralone (292), an aromatization process that probably proceeds via the norcaradiene valence tautomer presumed to be in equilibrium with the trienone. All these transformations are summarized in Scheme 209. In a related example Saba has shown that the norcaradiene form can be detected by low-temperature NMR and can be trapped in a Diels-Alder reaction with 4-phenyl-1,2,4-triazoline-3,5-dione (PTAD) (Scheme 210).^{414,415}

A study of substituent effects on this catalyzed intramolecular Buchner reaction shows that a methyl can be accommodated on the diazo carbon atom as in Scheme 211, hydrogenation of the product 296 opening up a short stereospecific route to the *trans*-perhydroazulenone system 297 (60% yield from the diazo ketone 295).⁴¹⁶ Recently this route has been applied to the synthesis of the pseudoguaianolide sesquiterpene, (\pm)-

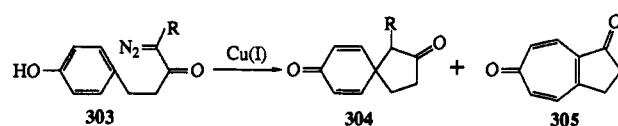
Scheme 212



Scheme 213



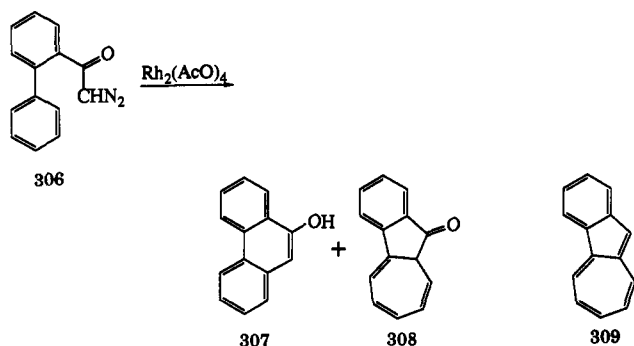
Scheme 214



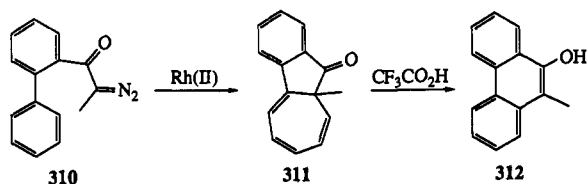
confertin (299), from diazo ketone 298 (Scheme 212).^{417,418} More highly substituted aromatics have also been studied in the course of guaianolide and pseudoguaianolide synthesis. For example, rhodium(II) mandelate-catalyzed cyclization of diazo ketone 300 produced the ring-expanded product 301 which on hydrogenation furnished the tricyclic lactone 302 (Scheme 213).⁴¹⁶ With para phenolic groups in the diazo ketone yet another cyclization pathway may be followed.⁴¹⁹⁻⁴²³ For example, diazo ketone 303 on exposure to copper(I) chloride furnishes both spirodienone 304 and cycloheptatrienone 305; depending on reaction conditions the spirodienone 304 may be the sole product (Scheme 214).⁴¹⁹ Other active catalysts include rhodium and palladium carboxylates.⁴²¹ This route to spirodienones has been employed in synthetic studies directed toward the solavetivone, aphidicolane, and stemodane sesquiterpenes.⁴²¹⁻⁴²³

As we have just seen with diazo ketone 288 (Scheme 209), the mild conditions associated with rhodium catalysis, as compared with copper, do provide more favorable circumstances for observing unstable primary reaction products. Another case in point is the formation of phenanthrol 307 from biphenyl diazo ketone 306 under copper catalysis.⁴²⁴ Superficially the reaction may appear to be an aromatic C-H insertion process; its behavior under rhodium catalysis suggests a Buchner-type reaction. The crude product from rhodium(II)-catalyzed decomposition of 306 contained about 15% of an unstable substance which slowly rearranged into phenanthrol on standing at room temperature. Furthermore, lithium aluminum hydride reduction of the product mixture gave benzazulene (309, 5%), suggesting that the minor component is indeed the Buchner product 308 (Scheme 215).⁴²⁵

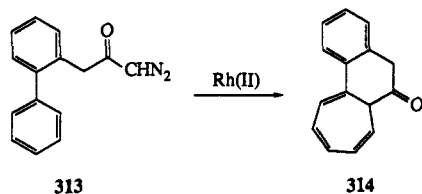
Scheme 215



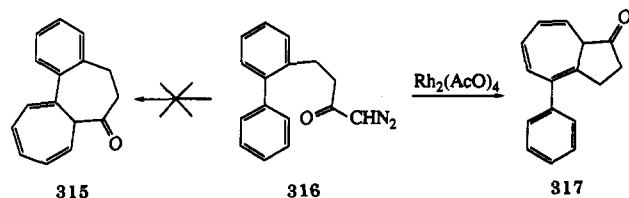
Scheme 216



Scheme 217



Scheme 218

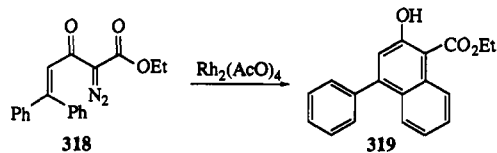


Interestingly, a major change of behavior occurs in the biphenyl series when a methyl substituent is added to the diazo carbon atom of **306**.⁴²⁵ Decomposition of diazo ketone **310** employing rhodium(II) mandelate furnished as the sole product the stable tricyclic azulenone **311** (Scheme 216). Furthermore, this product did not rearomatize easily, requiring treatment with hot trifluoroacetic acid to bring about conversion to 10-methyl-9-phenanthrol (**312**).

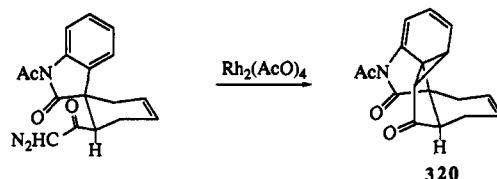
Diazo ketone **313**, a simple homologue of **306** with a longer side chain, also underwent smooth catalyzed decomposition to the ring-expanded ketone **314** in 95% yield (Scheme 217).⁴²⁵ The next homologue in the biphenyl series, diazo ketone **316**, did not, however, continue the trend and produce the colchicine-like benzodicycloheptyl system **315** in Scheme 218. Rather the product was the bicyclic phenylazulenone (**317**), indicating that the distal benzene ring in **316** acts as a substituent in the reaction and not as a site for carbenoid attack.⁴²⁵

A contrasting picture is observed in the rhodium(II) acetate-catalyzed decomposition of diazo ketone **318**, which furnished the naphthol **319** exclusively (Scheme 219).⁴²⁶ It is quite possible that this product is formed via a norcaradiene-like intermediate which would be expected to aromatized readily rather than undergo ring expansion. There is at least one example of

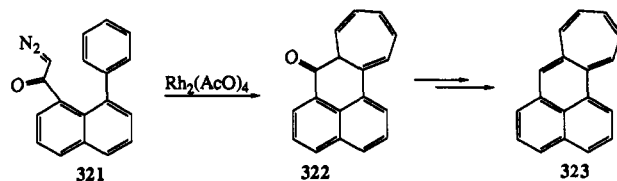
Scheme 219



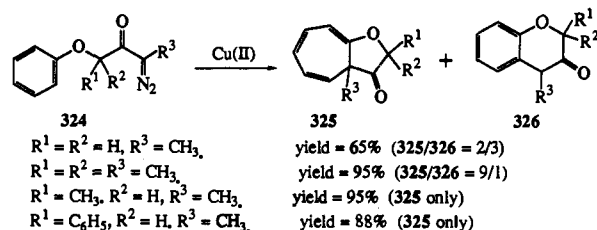
Scheme 220



Scheme 221



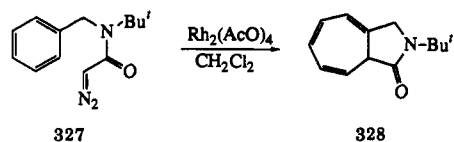
Scheme 222



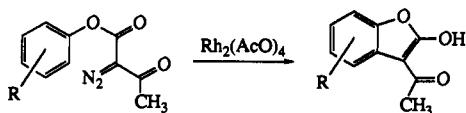
isolation of a stable norcaradiene from a catalyzed decomposition of a diazo ketone. Wenkert and Liu⁴²⁷ found that decomposition of the diazo ketone in Scheme 220 using rhodium(II) acetate furnished **320** in 80% yields. A final example of the use in synthesis of intramolecular carbocyclic ring expansion is the construction by Murata and co-workers⁴²⁸ of cyclohepta[α]phenylene (**323**), a highly electron-donating non-alternant hydrocarbon. Rhodium(II) acetate-catalyzed decomposition of diazo ketone **321** furnished the necessary tetracyclic framework **322** in 89% yield and reductive removal of the oxygen function followed by dehydrogenation completed the synthesis of **323** (Scheme 221).

There are now several examples of catalyzed aromatic cycloadditions, all intramolecular, leading to heterocyclic systems. Saba and co-workers⁴²⁹ found that diazo ketones **324** with α -phenoxy substituents of the type shown in Scheme 222 undergo cyclization catalyzed by bis(hexafluoroacetate)copper(II) to furnish mixtures of cyclohepta-furanones **325** and chromanones **326** whose compositions were influenced by the degree and position of substituents in the precursors. The cyclohepta-furanones **325** were observed to rearomatize easily to chromanones **326**, e.g. in contact with silica gel, an instability reminiscent of their carbocyclic counterparts, the azulenones, discussed earlier. Doyle's group⁴³⁰ has examined similar routes to *N*-heterocycles using as substrates *N*-alkyl-*N*-benzyl diazoacetamides and rhodium(II) acetate as the catalyst. With the *N*-*tert*-butyl precursor **327** (Scheme 223) cyclization proceeded

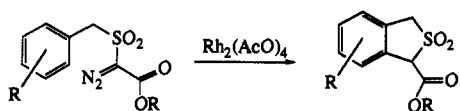
Scheme 223



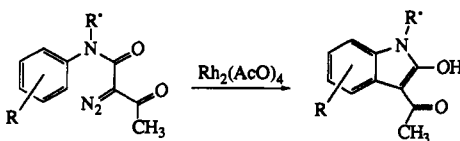
Scheme 224



Scheme 225



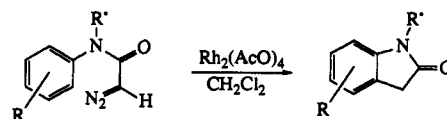
Scheme 226



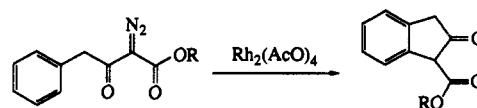
quantitatively to afford azabicyclo[5.3.0]decatrione 328. Cyclization occurred with comparable efficiency in the *N,N*-dibenzyl precursor but with the *N*-methyl precursor cyclization occurred in much lower yield, although it did improve on changing the catalyst to rhodium(II) perfluorobutyrate. Unlike their oxygen and carbon counterparts, these azabicycles did not rearomatize even on prolonged exposure to either strong protonic or Lewis acids.

Regardless of the relative stabilities of the cycloheptatrienyl adducts, the processes described above can be classified as aromatic cycloadditions of keto carbenoids. There is another related intramolecular reaction of diazocarbonyl compounds bearing aromatic substituent which leads to bicyclic aromatic products apparently without the intervention of ring-expanded intermediates. This latter process is often referred to as aromatic C-H insertion of carbenoids although mechanistically electrophilic aromatic substitution may more accurately characterize the transformation. Experiments designed to allow a distinction between these two processes appear not to have been conducted. However, it is probably significant that some examples in which rhodium(II) carboxylates are catalytically active can also be brought about by protonic acids, suggesting that acid-promoted electrophilic aromatic substitution is an alternative to the carbenoid C-H insertion pathway. The common feature of these reactions is annulation of an aromatic system with a five-membered carbocyclic or heterocyclic ring. Durst and his co-workers⁴³¹⁻⁴³⁴ have studied these annulations extensively employing α -diazo- β -keto esters (Scheme 224), α -diazo- β -sulfonyl esters (Scheme 225), and α -diazo- β -keto amides (Scheme 226). Doyle and co-workers⁴³⁵ have independently studied *N*-aryldiazoacetamides and *N*-aryldiazoacetoacetamides (Schemes 226 and 227). Aromatic substrates include simple monosubstituted benzenes, thiophenes, and indoles.⁴³³ The preferred catalyst was rhodium(II) acetate or trifluoroacetate. The perfluorosulfonic acid, Nafion-

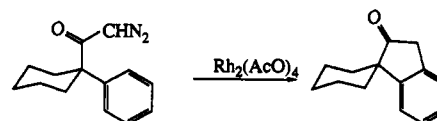
Scheme 227



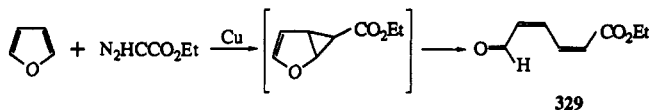
Scheme 228



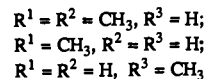
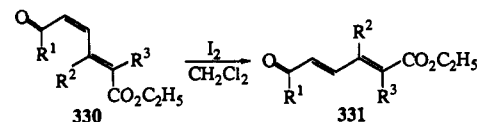
Scheme 229



Scheme 230



Scheme 231



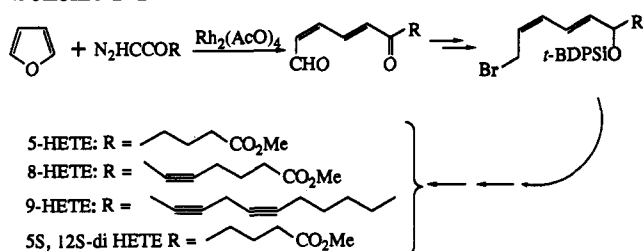
H, also catalyzed the cyclization of Doyle's diazoacetamides, but not diazoacetoacetamides, and yields of 2-indolinones were higher than those obtained with rhodium(II) acetate.⁴³⁵ Taber²⁷² has used rhodium(II) acetate to catalyze the formation of 1-carboxy-2-indanone from the diazo keto ester in Scheme 228, and this catalyst was also used by Nakatani⁴³⁶ to form the tricyclic indanone in Scheme 229.

2. Heteroaromatic Compounds

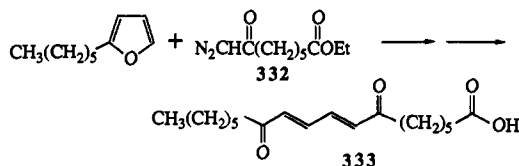
Among other aromatics whose reactions with diazocarbonyls have found applications in synthesis are furan, pyrrole, and thiophene. In an early study using copper catalysis Novac and Sorm⁴³⁷ observed that cyclopropanation of furan with ethyl diazoacetate is possible (Scheme 230), but that the initially formed cycloadduct undergoes a ready ring-opening process to afford the *Z,E*-diene adduct 329. Several groups have recognized the synthetic potential of this short route to functionalized dienes, although most of the more recent applications use rhodium rather than copper catalysts. Although some of the cycloadducts are isolable, notable those derived from ethyl diazoacetate, in most cases they spontaneously ring open under the reaction conditions or can be induced to do so by the addition of an acid. The fact that the resulting *Z,E*-dienes 330 can be readily isomerized to *E,E*-isomers 331 (Scheme 231)^{438,439} further enhances the usefulness of this synthesis.

The rhodium-induced furan-diazocarbonyl unraveling process has been applied with notable success to

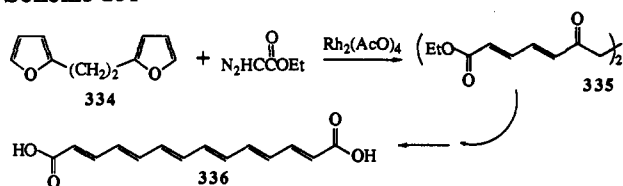
Scheme 232



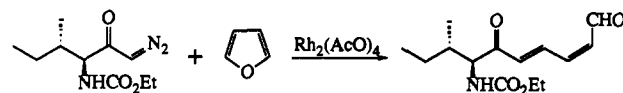
Scheme 233



Scheme 234



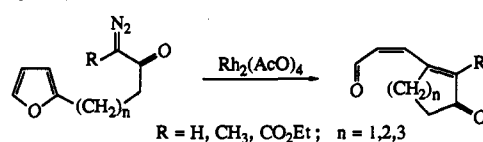
Scheme 235



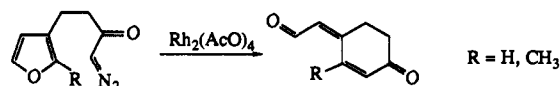
leukotriene synthesis by a Merck Frost Canadian group.⁴⁴⁰⁻⁴⁴² In each case the aldehyde released in the ring-opening process was used to attach the remainder of the polyene system. Some representative examples are shown in Scheme 232. Total synthesis of ostopan acid (333), a plant cytotoxin, has been achieved (Scheme 233),⁴⁴³ in a similar way from 2-*n*-hexylfuran and the diazo ketone 332, the *E,E*-diene having been produced by iodine-catalyzed isomerization of the *Z,E* isomer. Wenkert and co-workers⁴³⁹ have combined the products of furan-diazoacetate reactions with Wittig reagents to form 1,6-diacyl-1,3,5-hexatrienes and segments of retinol and β -carotene. The same group in their synthesis of corticrocin (336),⁴³⁹ a fungal pigment, employed a double unraveling of a difuryl ethane 334 (Scheme 234) with ethyl diazoacetate to furnish the tetraene 335 suitable for conversion to the natural product by reduction of the two keto functions followed by double dehydration of the resulting diol. Optically pure diazo ketones derived from natural amino acids have been combined with furan under rhodium catalysis to produce aldehydes suitable for elaboration, via Wittig reactions, into optically pure α -amino keto polyene systems of the type shown in Scheme 235.⁴⁴⁴

The intramolecular version of the furan-diazocarbonyl reaction is an attractive route to carbocycles. Furans with side chains at C(2) of various lengths terminating in diazomethyl keto functions are known to undergo rhodium-catalyzed unraveling with the production of 2-cyclopentenones, 2-cyclohexanones, and 2-cycloheptenones to each of whose olefinic β -carbon atoms is attached an acrylaldehyde unit.^{445,446} Some representative examples from the work of Wenkert^{445,446}

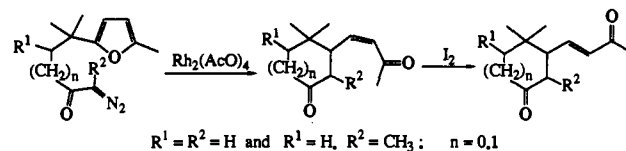
Scheme 236



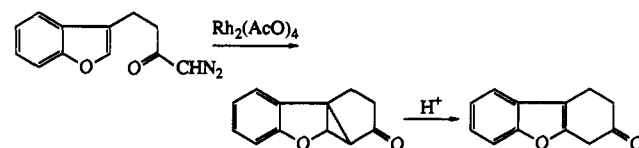
Scheme 237



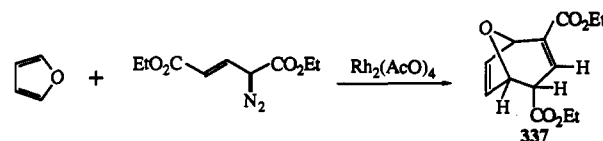
Scheme 238



Scheme 239



Scheme 240

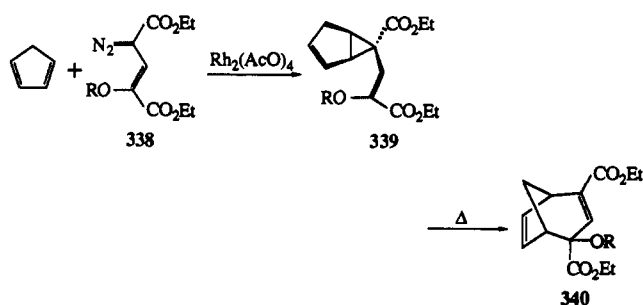


and Padwa^{447,448} and their respective groups are shown in Schemes 236-239.

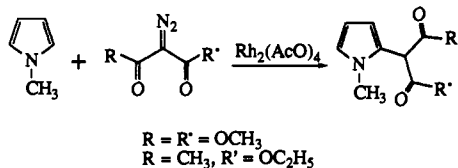
Yet another pathway for furan-diazocarbonyl cycloadditions is the [3 + 4] combination explored in detail by Davies and his group.⁴⁴⁹ They argued that while vinyl carbenes have a strong propensity for intramolecular reactions, their reactivity might be quite different if they were generated as metal carbenoid complexes by metal-catalyzed decomposition of vinyl diazo precursors. Such complexes should be more stable than free vinyl carbenes. Undesirable intramolecular side reactions should therefore be minimized. Davies tested this idea by preparing the vinyl diazo ester in Scheme 240 (from commercially available diethyl glutaconate via diazo transfer using *p*-(*n*-dodecylphenyl)sulfonyl azide) and exposing it to rhodium(II) acetate in the presence of furan at room temperature. The major reaction product was the bicyclic adduct 337, clearly demonstrating that a stereospecific [4 + 3] cycloaddition between a vinyl carbenoid and a furan is feasible. Subsequent studies revealed that formation of adducts of type 340 is the result of a tandem cyclopropanation-Cope rearrangement process, divinylcyclopropanes 339 having been isolated as intermediates (Scheme 241) from the reaction of the vinyl diazo ester 338 and cyclopentadiene.⁴⁵⁰

Pyrrrole and its derivatives exhibit a range of reactivity in catalyzed reactions with diazocarbonyls. This heterocycle possesses the additional feature that the electron supply can be modulated by *N*-substitution. Unlike furan, pyrrole, and its *N*-alkyl derivatives favor ring alkylation rather than cyclopropanation. In fact

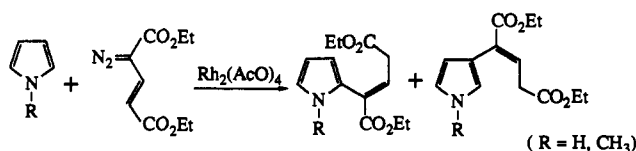
Scheme 241



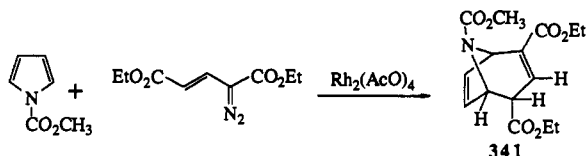
Scheme 242



Scheme 243

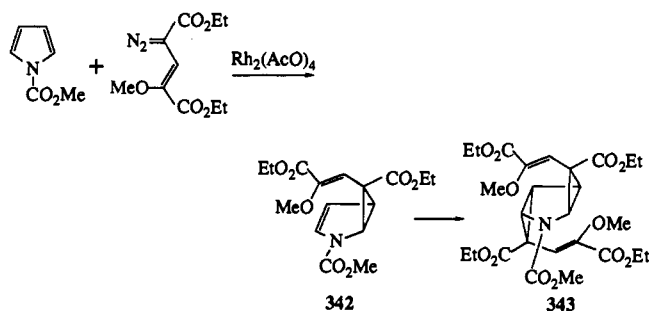


Scheme 244

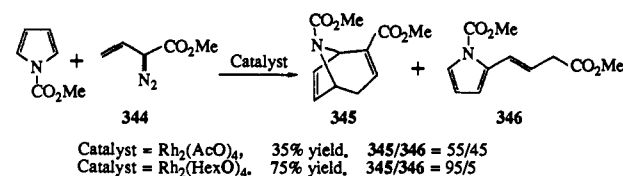


the copper-catalyzed reaction of ethyl diazoacetate with pyrrole or pyrrole derivatives has long been recognized as one of the most reliable routes to pyrrole-2-acetic ester.⁴⁵¹⁻⁴⁵⁶ Substitution at the 2-position is preferred, although not exclusively so. For example, *N*-methylpyrrole and ethyl diazomalonate give products of both 2- and 3-substitution in a 10:1 ratio. As part of research directed toward improved synthetic processes for tolmetin and zomepirac, Maryanoff⁴⁵⁴⁻⁴⁵⁶ has carried out a detailed study of the reaction of ethyl diazoacetate, dimethyl diazomalonate, and ethyl 2-diazoacetoacetate with *N*-methylpyrrole. All reactions showed high regiochemical preference for the formation of 2-substituted adducts. Rhodium(II) acetate resulted in high yield products from the dimethyl diazomalonate and ethyl 2-diazoacetoacetate (Scheme 242). For the reaction of ethyl diazoacetate, copper(II) compounds are the catalysts of choice.⁴⁵⁸ Substitution reactions with pyrrole and alkylpyrroles are presumably favored because the electron-releasing ability of the nitrogen atom stabilizes a zwitterionic intermediate and consequently cyclopropanation does not occur. Alternatively, cyclopropanation may occur but is rapidly followed by ring opening. The preference for ring alkylation of pyrrole and *N*-methylpyrrole is also observed with the vinyl carbenoid precursors of Davies (Scheme 243).⁴⁵⁷ However, on changing the substrate to *N*-(methoxycarbonyl)pyrrole (Scheme 244), where the ability of the nitrogen atom to stabilize a positive charge is considerably diminished, the tandem cyclopropanation-Cope rearrangement process takes over, providing a direct entry to the tropane skeleton 341.

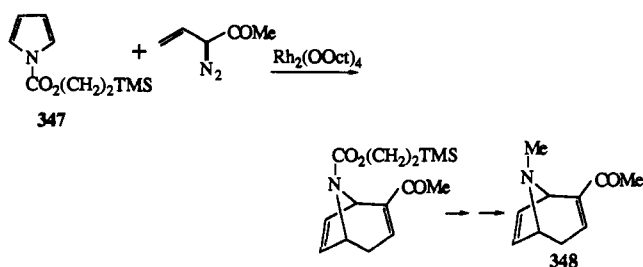
Scheme 245



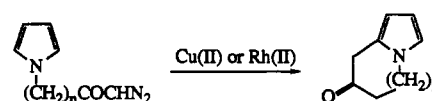
Scheme 246



Scheme 247



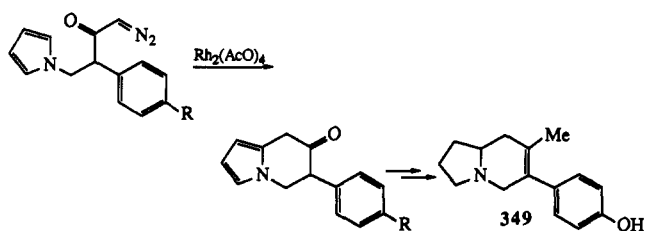
Scheme 248



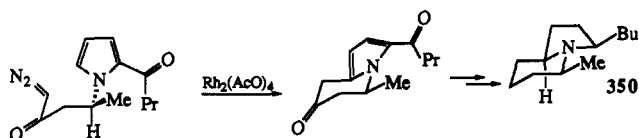
An interesting reaction was observed on decomposition of the bulky vinyl diazomethane in Scheme 245 in the presence of *N*-(methoxycarbonyl)pyrrole. In this case the initially formed divinylcyclopropane 342 was sterically too constrained to undergo Cope rearrangement, and instead further reaction of 342 produced the dicyclopropane adduct 343. In the case of a vinyl diazocarbonyl with a single electron-withdrawing group, as in 344, reaction with the *N*-acylated pyrrole to form the tropane system 345 (Scheme 246) was strongly catalyst dependent, with rhodium(II) hexanoate in hexane furnishing a much higher conversion to 345 than rhodium(II) acetate in dichloromethane.⁴⁵⁸ The efficacy of this approach to tropane alkaloids has been demonstrated by Davies⁴⁵⁸ in a short synthesis of (\pm)-ferruginine 348 from the *N*-acylated pyrrole 347 in Scheme 247. In this case the key cyclization step was accomplished using rhodium(II) octanoate.

The intramolecular version of the pyrrole-diazocarbonyl alkylation reaction has been explored by Jefford and Johncock⁴⁵⁹ in a very efficient route to another important group of alkaloids, the indolizidines. These workers were among the first to show that simple *N*-alkylpyrroles having the diazocarbonyl moiety in the side chain of the type shown in Scheme 248 undergo very efficient intramolecular alkylation to form pyrrolizidines with either copper⁴⁵⁹ or rhodium catalysis.⁴⁶⁰⁻⁴⁶⁴ Applications of this route to the synthesis of (\pm)-ipalbidine (349), (+)-monomorine (350), (-)-

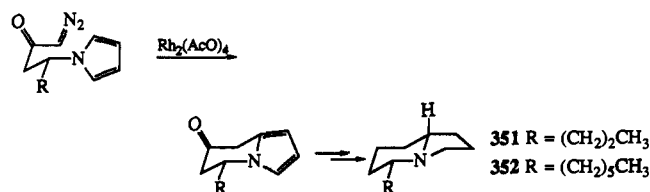
Scheme 249



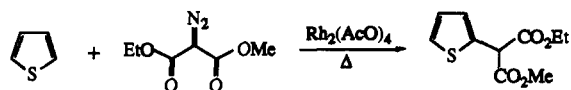
Scheme 250



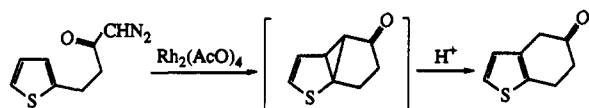
Scheme 251



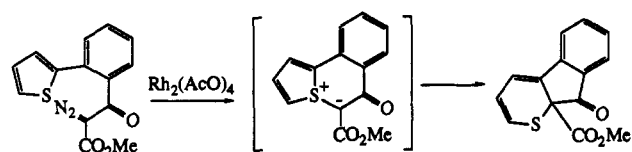
Scheme 252



Scheme 253



Scheme 254

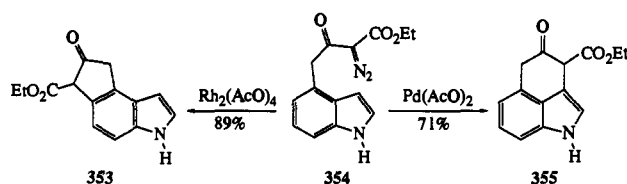


indolizidine 167B (351), and (-)-indolizidine 209D (352) are shown in Schemes 249–251; the enantiospecific routes in the latter two cases were constructed using *N*-alkylpyrroles derived from optically active amino acids.^{461–464}

Catalytic reaction between thiophenes and diazocarbonyls has been known for several years. Rhodium(II) salts are the catalysts of choice for this reaction type.⁴⁶⁵ In general, three possible processes, ylide formation, cyclopropanation, and C–H insertion, may be involved in the reaction; also ylide formation may be responsible for the C–H insertion and cyclopropanation.^{465,466} The outcome of the reaction depends upon the diazocarbonyl precursors and reaction conditions. In addition, the intramolecular version of this reaction is also possible.^{447,448,467} Some representative examples are shown in Schemes 252–254.

Finally, the outcome of intramolecular aromatic cycloaddition not only depends upon the nature of the diazocarbonyl precursor, but also depends upon the catalyst employed in the reaction. Decomposition of

Scheme 255

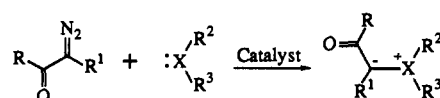


diazocarbonyl 354 with rhodium(II) acetate and palladium(II) acetate led to regioisomers 353 and 355, respectively (Scheme 255).⁴⁶⁸

E. Ylide Formation and Subsequent Reactions

Carbenoids derived from α -diazocarbonyl compounds exhibit highly electrophilic properties. They can readily react with an available heteroatom to effect ylide formation (Scheme 256). Chemical transformations of

Scheme 256



ylides have shown great versatility in the synthesis of natural products as well as other complex molecules. Recently, ylides derived from α -diazocarbonyl compounds have received considerable attention and there are numerous examples in the literature concerning the application of ylide generation via catalytic methods.

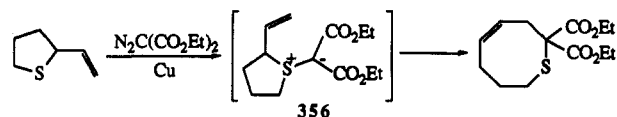
In this section we will briefly review formation from diazocarbonyl compounds and their subsequent reactions. The main emphasis will be placed on synthetic applications.

1. [2,3]-Sigmatropic Rearrangements

Symmetry-allowed [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement is a facile bond reorganization process with catalytically generated ylides.⁴⁶⁹ Transition metal-catalyzed reactions of diazocarbonyl compounds with a broad selection of allylic substrates result in products derived from [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement of intermediate allylic ylides.

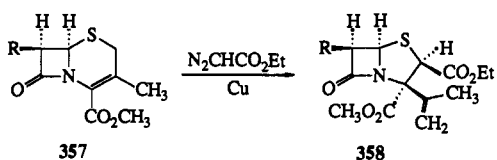
Catalytic decomposition of diazocarbonyl compounds in the presence of allylic sulfides, ethers, selenides, amines, and halides may form allylic ylides. Vedejs and Hagen⁴⁷⁰ reported the application of the [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement in the ring expansion of an allylic sulfide substrate 356, derived from the copper-catalyzed decomposition of diazomalonnate (Scheme 257).

Scheme 257

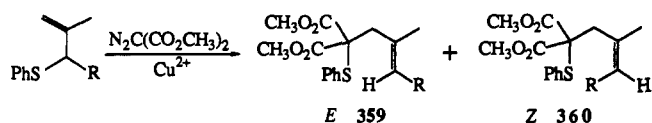


The [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement of an allylic sulfur ylide, generated by catalytic decomposition of ethyl diazoacetate, has also been used in the stereocontrolled conversion of the cephalosporin (357) to the penicillin ring system 358 (Scheme 258).⁴⁶⁹ Another interesting application (Scheme 259) of the [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement of allylic sulfur ylides derived from carbenoids is in the synthesis of trisub-

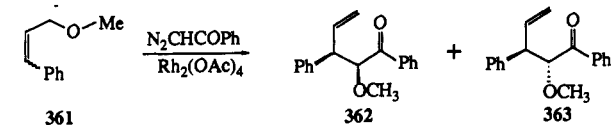
Scheme 258



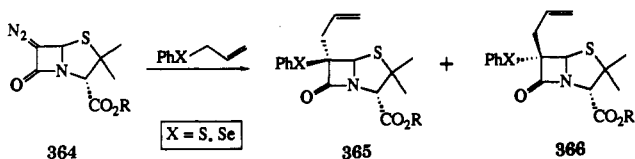
Scheme 259



Scheme 260



Scheme 261



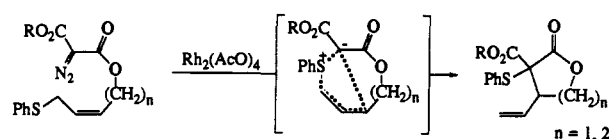
stituted olefins. There is a high level of stereoselectivity in this transformation, leading to a 9:1 ratio of (*E*)- and (*Z*)-olefins (359 and 360, respectively, Scheme 259).⁴⁷¹ The strong preference for the *E* isomer is clearly a general attribute of the [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement process. Doyle and co-workers⁴⁷² reported the formation of allylic oxonium ylides via catalytic reaction of diazo ketones with allyl methyl ethers. The resulting [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement products 362 and 363 showed high degrees of diastereoselectivity, the preference depending on the geometry of the allyl methyl ether 361 (Scheme 260). These results can be explained by steric influences in the transition state.

Allylic selenium ylides, derived from the catalytic reaction of diazocarbonyl compounds 364 with allylic selenides, also undergo a [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement. Thomas and coworkers^{473,474} have utilized both allylic sulfur and allylic selenium ylides in the synthesis of 6-substituted penicillin analogues 365 and 366 (Scheme 261).

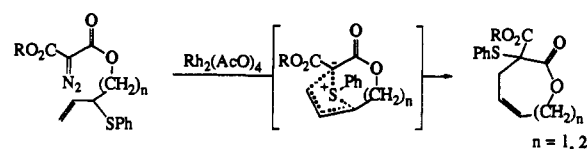
The intermolecular reaction of carbenoids derived from diazocarbonyl compounds with allylic amines and allylic halides (Cl, Br, and I) to form the corresponding allylic ylides and their subsequent [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement is also known. The scope of these ylide formations and the influence of catalysts have been studied by Doyle's group.^{475,476} Allylamines and iodides give the corresponding sigmatropic rearrangement product exclusively, whereas allyl bromides and chlorides undergo catalytic cyclopropanation in competition with ylide formation and rearrangement.

Catalytic decomposition of diazocarbonyl compounds containing heteroatoms in intramolecular allylic systems is also known. These ylides and their subsequent [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangements provide a convenient and powerful tool for the construction of natural products, as well as other carbonyl compounds possessing interesting molecular frameworks.

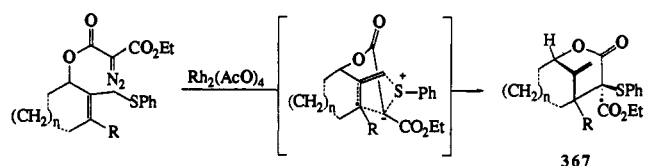
Scheme 262



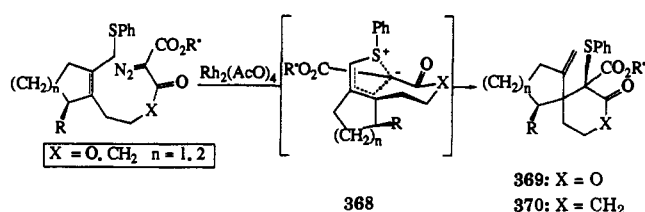
Scheme 263



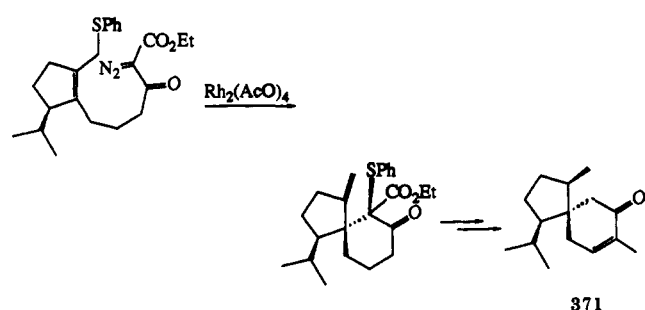
Scheme 264



Scheme 265



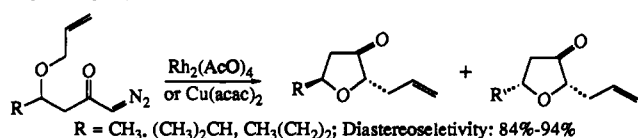
Scheme 266



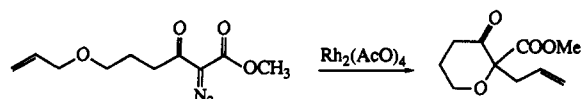
For example, an attractive method for construction of five- to eight-membered lactones, based on intramolecular allylic sulfur ylide formation and subsequent [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement, has been reported by Kido and Yoshikoshi's group (Schemes 262 and 263).⁴⁷⁷⁻⁴⁸⁰ This synthetic methodology has been extended to the efficient synthesis of bridged δ -lactones 367,⁴⁶¹ spiro-fused five- and six-membered lactones⁴⁸² (369, X = O), and spiro carbocyclic compounds (370, X = CH₂)⁴⁸³ (Schemes 264 and 265). Because the [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement usually proceeds through a highly ordered cyclic transition state, conformational analysis may be applied to predict and control the stereochemical outcome.⁴⁸⁴

This method of constructing spiro carbocyclic compounds (370, X = CH₂) has also been used in the stereoselective synthesis of the sesquiterpene (+)-acorenone B (371)⁴⁸³ (Scheme 266). The remarkable stereoselectivity in the rearrangement process may result from the carbenoid approaching the sulfonium reaction site from the less hindered side, away from the R substituent (isopropyl group), as seen in the transition state 368 (Scheme 265).

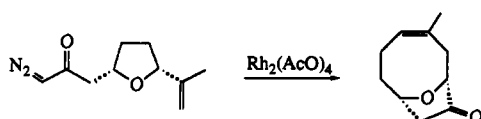
Scheme 267



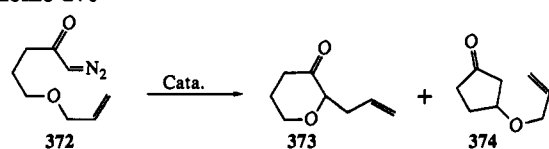
Scheme 268



Scheme 269



Scheme 270

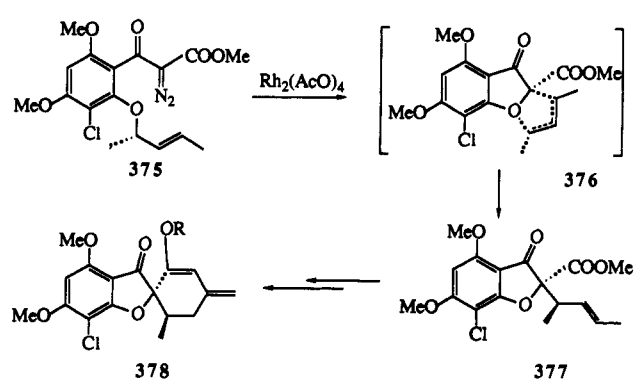


Catalyst	yield	yield
Rh ₂ (AcO) ₄	37%	22%
Cu(hfacac) ₂	83%	0%

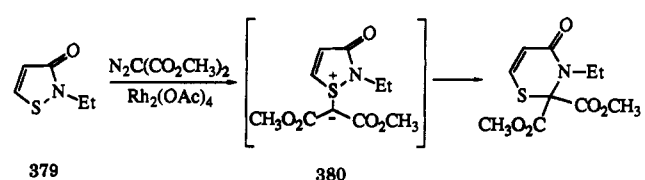
Generation of allylic oxonium ylides derived from intramolecular carbenoid addition to an ether oxygen atom, followed by concerted [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement provides novel methodology for the construction of five-, six-, and eight-membered oxygen heterocycles. Some representative examples carried out by Pirrung's,⁴⁸⁵ Johnson's,⁴⁸⁶ and Clark's⁴⁸⁷ research groups are illustrated in Schemes 267–269. Recently, Clark and co-workers⁴⁸⁸ have demonstrated that the intramolecular oxonium ylide formation process, in some cases, is catalyst dependent. Copper(II) hexafluoroacetylacetonate [Cu(hfacac)₂] provided exceptional chemoselectivity in the cyclization of diazo ketone **372** to give the solo product **373** from ylide generation (Scheme 270). Seven- and eight-membered ring ethers have also been synthesized via this methodology in 76% and 40%, respectively. The intramolecular generation and [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement of oxonium ylides was also used by Pirrung and co-workers⁴⁸⁹ in the preparation of (+)-griseofulvin (**378**). Decomposition of diazocarbonyl precursor **375** using rhodium(II) pivalate as the catalyst in refluxing benzene provided the sigmatropically rearranged product **377** which served as a key step in the total synthesis. The stereochemistry of this process can be understood in terms of a transition-state model **376** that resembles an oxabicyclo[3.3.0]octane ring system with the key stereochemistry-defining methyl group located on the convex face (Scheme 271).

Effective allylic oxonium ylide generation in the transition metal-catalyzed reactions of diazocarbonyl compounds depends on the catalyst, the type of diazo carbonyl compound, and competition with other transformations.⁴¹ Although copper catalysts are in general less efficient for carbenoid transformations when compared to their rhodium counterparts, they usually favor the ylide formation process.¹⁴⁵

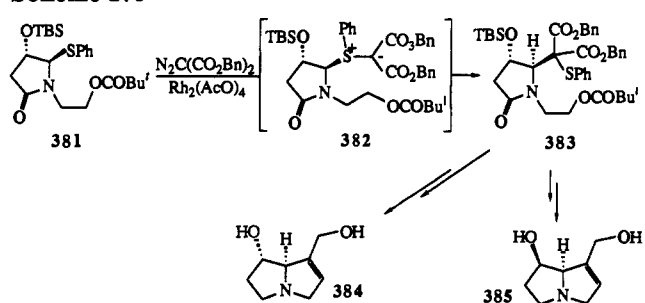
Scheme 271



Scheme 272



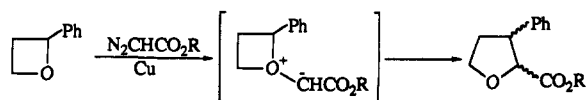
Scheme 273



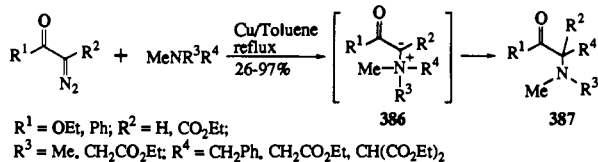
2. [1,2]-Sigmatropic Rearrangements

There have been many reports of ylide formation by catalytic methods, followed by Stevens [1,2]-shift leading to the formation of new carbon-carbon bonds. Although concerted [1,2]-shifts are forbidden processes according to the Woodward-Hoffmann rules,⁴⁹⁰ the many reports of apparent [1,2]-shift of ylides derived from reaction of carbenoids and heteroatoms suggest the rearrangements occur via a homolysis-recombination mechanism. Ylides derived from catalytic reactions of diazo carbonyl compounds which undergo [1,2]-shift processes are becoming increasingly useful in synthetic chemistry. Most applications of this sequence involve the intramolecular mode. However, a few examples of applications of intermolecular ylide formation followed by [1,2]-shift are summarized here. The carbenoid derived from rhodium(II) acetate-catalyzed decomposition of dimethyl diazomalonate reacts with *N*-ethylisothiazol-3(2*H*)-one (**379**) to form the sulfide ylide **380**, which then undergoes ring expansion via a [1,2]-shift process (Scheme 272).⁴⁹¹ Two pyrrolizidine alkaloids, (+)-heliotridine (**384**) and (+)-retronecine (**385**), have recently been synthesized by Kametani's group (Scheme 273).⁴⁹² The crucial step of both synthetic sequences was stereoselective formation of the sulfur ylide **382** via rhodium acetate-catalyzed decomposition of diazomalonate in the presence of the optically active sulfide **381**, followed by [1,2]-shift to afford the key intermediate **383**. Further functional group manipulations furnished both target alkaloids.

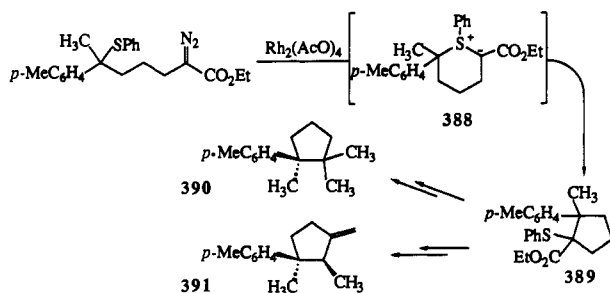
Scheme 274



Scheme 275



Scheme 276



Nozaki and co-workers⁴⁹³ have reported the intermolecular formation of an oxonium ylide from a cyclic ether via catalysis. [1,2]-Shift of the ylide afforded the ring-enlargement products (Scheme 274). Recently, West and co-workers⁴⁹⁴ have reported a sequence leading to the construction of tertiary α -amino ketones and α -amino esters from amines and diazocarbonyl compounds. Thus, copper-catalyzed decomposition of simple diazocarbonyls in the presence of tertiary amines gave corresponding ammonium ylides **386** which underwent facile [1,2]-shift to give α -substituted α -amino ketones or α -amino esters **387** (Scheme 275).⁴⁹⁴

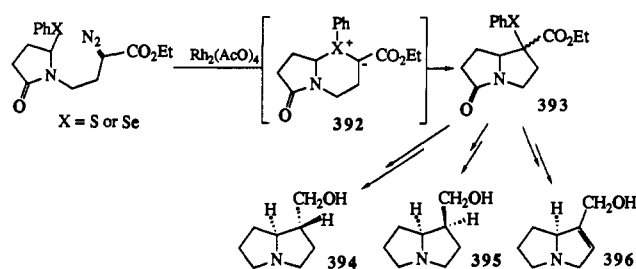
The intramolecular addition of a carbenoid to a heteroatom lone pair has proven to be an efficient, direct route to the formation of cyclic ylides under mild conditions. The [1,2]-shift process of the cyclic ylide has recently received considerable attention. Two aromatic sesquiterpenes, (\pm)-cuparene (**390**) and (\pm)-laurene (**391**), were synthesized by a sequence^{495,496} in which the key step was the formation of a new carbon-carbon bond at a benzylic position by formation of the sulfur ylide **388** followed by the [1,2]-shift process to give **389** (Scheme 276).

Sulfur or selenium ylide **392**, derived from the intramolecular catalytic method, undergoes a [1,2]-shift process to form a new five-membered ring **393**. This synthetic strategy^{497,498} was employed in the construction of three pyrrolizidine alkaloids, (\pm)-trachelanthamidine (**394**), (\pm)-isoretronecanol (**395**), and (\pm)-supinidine (**396**) (Scheme 277).

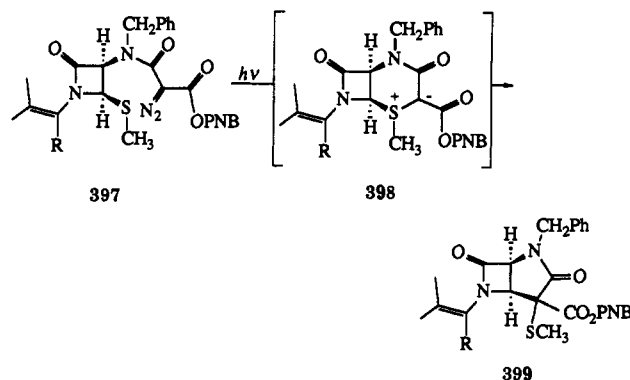
A similar strategy has been used in the synthesis of the bicyclic β -lactam **399**.⁴⁹⁹ The carbene generated by the irradiation of diazo ester **397** reacts to give the cyclic sulfur ylide **398**, which undergoes a [1,2]-shift to **399** with the desired chirality (Scheme 278).

Cyclic oxonium ylides are readily generated from the intramolecular catalytic reaction of diazocarbonyl compounds containing ethereal oxygen groups. The [1,2]-shift pathways of the cyclic oxonium ylide offers a novel approach to the construction of substituted

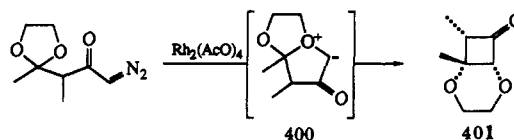
Scheme 277



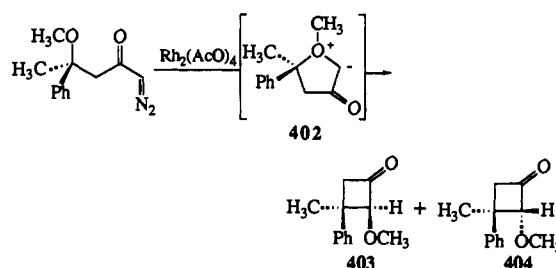
Scheme 278



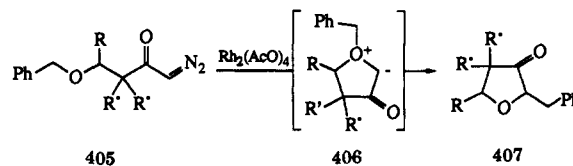
Scheme 279



Scheme 280



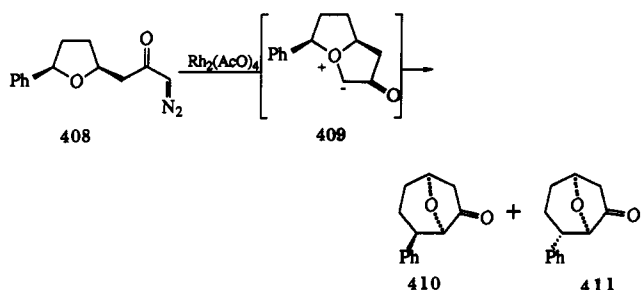
Scheme 281



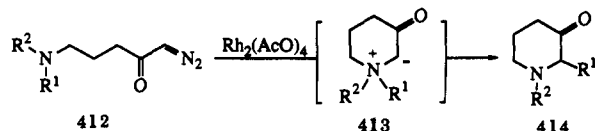
carbocycles⁴⁸⁶ and substituted cyclic ethers.⁵⁰⁰⁻⁵⁰² This synthetic strategy has been exploited in the synthesis of substituted cyclobutanones **401**, **403**, and **404** from the corresponding cyclic oxonium ylides (**400** and **402**) by Roskamp and Johnson (Schemes 279 and 280).⁴⁸⁶

West and coworkers⁵⁰⁰ have successfully utilized the tandem cyclic oxonium ylide generation-Stevens [1,2]-shift protocol in the synthesis of functionalized tetrahydrofuranones. Catalytic decomposition of ω -alkoxy- α' -diazoketone **405** forms the cyclic oxonium ylide **406** with subsequent generation of cyclic ether **407** (Scheme 281). The formation of the cyclic ether **407** in good yield by this [1,2]-shift approach was attributed to the presence of a benzylic migrating group. O-Bridged

Scheme 282



Scheme 283



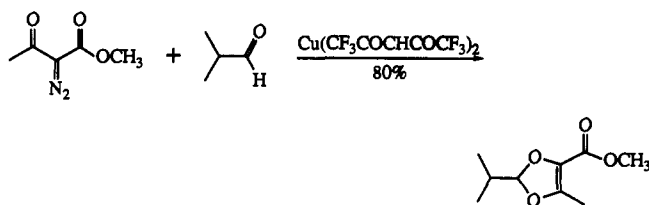
medium-sized carbocyclic rings have been synthesized via same methodology. Fused bicyclic oxonium ylide 409, generated with catalytic rhodium acetate from diazo ketone 408, undergoes a [1,2]-shift to give O-bridged seven-membered carbocycles 410 and 411 with a high degree of stereoselectivity (410/411 = 15–19/1) (Scheme 282).⁵⁰¹ Similarly, catalytic decomposition of the diazocarbonyl compound 412 bearing dialkylamino substituents six centers away from the carbenoid center forms the corresponding ammonium ylide 413 which undergoes the Stevens [1,2]-shift of one of the exocyclic groups to form the six-membered nitrogen heterocycle 414 (Scheme 283).⁵⁰²

3. Reactions of Carbonyl and Thiocarbonyl Ylides Derived from Diazocarbonyl Precursors

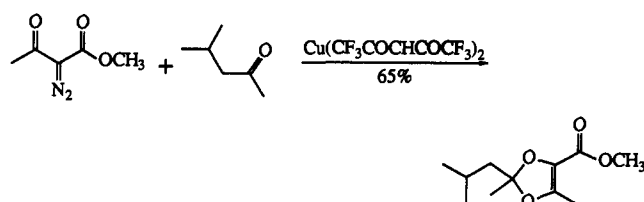
Carbonyl ylide generation from the reaction of carbenes and carbenoids with carbonyl compounds has received considerable attention, from both a mechanistic and a synthetic point of view. The largest contribution to this field is that of Padwa and co-workers, whose work has recently been summarized in a short review.⁵⁰³ In this section an outline of the use of carbonyl ylide in organic synthesis is presented. One of the simplest routes to the generation of carbonyl ylides involves the addition of a carbene or carbenoid onto the oxygen atom of a carbonyl group. In many cases, this can be readily achieved via catalytic decomposition of a diazocarbonyl compound in the presence of a carbonyl group. Carbonyl ylides are efficiently trapped by dipolarophiles (*vide infra*). However, in the absence of trapping agents, the fate of carbonyl ylides has not been thoroughly studied.⁵⁰⁴

Diazocarbonyl compounds react with ketones or aldehydes to furnish products which strongly depend on the nature of diazocarbonyl and reaction conditions. Use of simple diazo esters results in homologation products under Lewis acid catalysis.⁵⁰⁵ In the presence of organotellurium reagents, e.g. dibutyl telluride, and catalytic amounts of copper(I), dimethyl diazomalonate, or ethyl diazoacetate, reacts with aldehydes to afford olefination products.⁵⁰⁶ However, certain diazocarbonyl compounds, e.g. 2-diazo-3-oxobutyrates or 3-diazo-2,4-pentanedione, react with aldehydes and ketones in the presence of a copper(II) catalyst to give corresponding 1,3-dioxoles.^{507–509} The yields of the reaction depend on the nature of catalyst ligands. The reaction is

Scheme 284



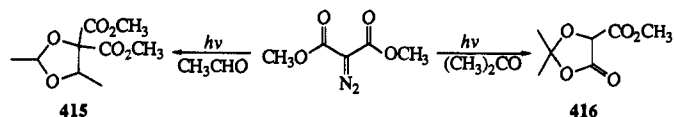
Scheme 285



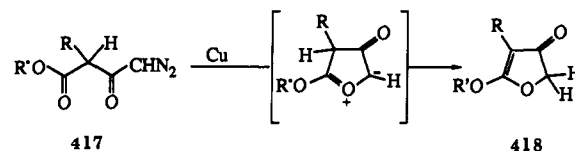
Scheme 286



Scheme 287



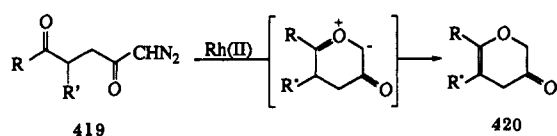
Scheme 288



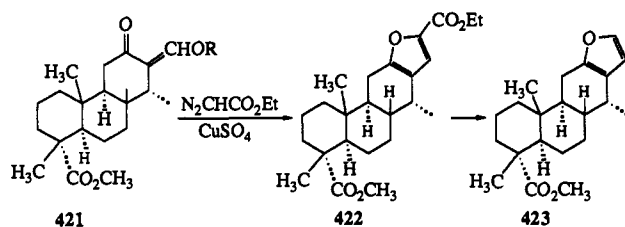
believed to involve initial formation of a carbonyl ylide which undergoes an intramolecular cyclization to afford the dioxole. Some representative examples from the work of Alonso and his co-workers^{507–509} are shown in Schemes 284–286. Similarly, photolytic decomposition of dimethyl diazomalonate in neat acetone afforded dioxole adduct 416 via an intramolecular cyclization process (Scheme 287). On the other hand, the dimethyl diazomalonate reaction with acetaldehyde does not undergo an intramolecular cyclization process; instead an intermolecular reaction with another molecule of acetaldehyde gives dioxole 415 (Scheme 287).⁵¹⁰ The reaction of dicarbomethoxycarbene with aromatic aldehydes via carbonyl ylide process has been studied by Huisgen and de March.⁵¹¹

One of the useful chemical transformations of the carbonyl ylides derived from the intramolecular reaction of a diazocarbonyl compound containing a carbonyl group consists of a hydrogen-migration process.⁴⁷¹ Bien and Gillon⁵¹³ have used this reaction in the synthesis of 3(2*H*)-furanones. Thus treatment of diazo ketone 417 with a copper catalyst produced the furanone 418 (Scheme 288). The proton-transfer process in this reaction occurs very rapidly; even in the presence of a variety of dipolarophiles, the reaction still proceeds with the formation of 3(2*H*)-furanones.⁵¹⁴ Similarly, Padwa and co-workers⁵¹⁵ have demonstrated that the hydrogen-migration process is also successful in the six-membered carbonyl ylide series. The decomposition of diazo

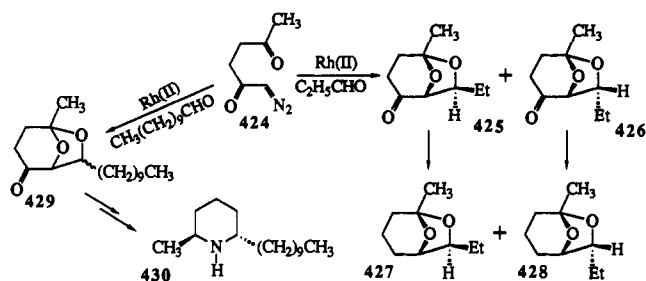
Scheme 289



Scheme 290



Scheme 291



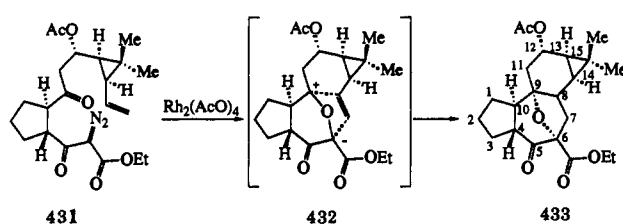
ketone 419 results in the formation of the cyclic enol ether 420 (Scheme 289).

Cyclization of carbonyl ylides containing an α,β -unsaturated carbon-carbon bond provides a facile route for the construction of the furan ring. This method has served as a key step in the total synthesis of the tetracyclic furanoid diterpene methyl vinhaticoate (423).⁵¹⁶ Reaction of the ketone 421 with the carbenoid derived from ethyl diazoacetate furnished the key intermediate 422, which was then selectively hydrolyzed and decarboxylated to give 423 (Scheme 290).

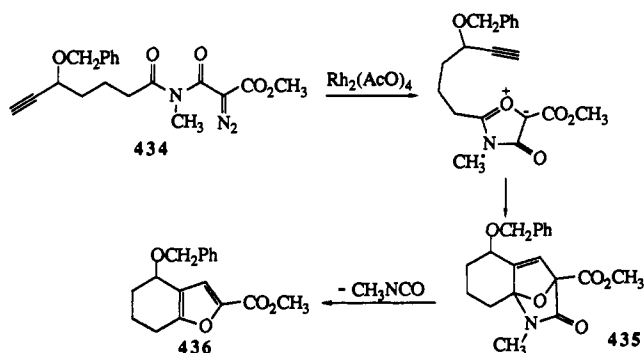
Carbonyl ylides derived via catalysis are readily trapped by dipolarophiles to form oxygen based heterocyclic compounds. The scope and mechanistic details of the intramolecular carbonyl ylide formation and subsequent 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition have been extensively studied.^{503,517,518} Bimolecular reaction of cyclic ylides with dipolarophiles is an attractive protocol for the synthesis of tetrahydrofurans. This methodology has been used in the synthesis of brevicomin,^{519,520} a key component of the aggregation pheromone of the female Western pine beetle. Thus, treatment of diazodione 424 with rhodium(II) acetate, in the presence of propionaldehyde, afforded bicyclic compounds as a chromatographically separable mixture of *exo* and *endo* isomers (425 and 426, respectively). Reduction leads to *exo*- and *endo*-brevicomins (427 and 428, respectively). Similarly, 6,8-dioxabicyclo[3,2,1]octane 429, the precursor for the synthesis of solenopsis A (430), was prepared by the same methodology (Scheme 291).^{519,520}

The intramolecular trapping of carbonyl ylide dipoles with an alkene or alkyne represents an effective method for the synthesis of complex polycyclic heterocycles. Varying the length of the group which separates the olefin or the alkyne from the carbonyl ylide dipoles allows for the synthesis of a variety of interesting oxopolycyclic ring systems.⁵⁰³ An interesting application of this method is found as the central step in

Scheme 292



Scheme 293

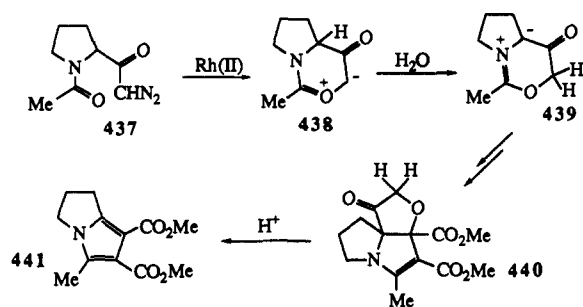


Dauben's synthesis of the tigliane ring system.⁵²¹ Thus, carbonyl ylide 432, generated from the diazocarbonyl 431 in the presence of a catalytic amount of rhodium(II) acetate, underwent an intramolecular addition with the olefin to form the C_6,C_9 -oxido-bridged tigliane ring system 433 (Scheme 292). The two new stereocenters at C-8 and C-9 were formed with the correct configurations relative to C-14 and C-15 presented by the natural tigliane compounds. The high stereospecificity in the ring-closure reaction could be related to steric interactions and/or the introduction of conformational strain in the tether which does not favor a transition state that leads the cyclopropane ring and the oxido bridge to be on the same side of the molecule.

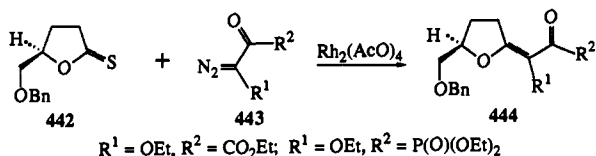
The 1,3-oxazolium 4-oxides (isomünchnones) are readily obtained through the catalytic cyclization of a suitable diazoimide. This type of mesoionic oxazolium ylide corresponds to the cyclic equivalent of a carbonyl ylide and undergoes 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition. Intramolecular cycloaddition of isomünchnones containing π -bonds suitably placed within the molecule have been examined in some detail.⁵²²⁻⁵²⁶ This cycloaddition protocol emerged as an attractive sequence. For example, reactions of acetylenic isomünchnones afforded annulated furans. Thus, catalytic decomposition of diazoimide 434 with rhodium(II) acetate in refluxing toluene, furnished cycloadduct 435, which then underwent a subsequent cycloreversion reaction to give furan 436 (Scheme 293).⁵²³

The carbonyl ylide dipole, generated by rhodium(II)-catalyzed diazo ketone cyclization onto a neighboring amide carbonyl group, can undergo a proton shift to form the thermodynamically more stable azomethine ylide. The 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition of the azomethine ylide and subsequent rearrangement provides a potentially useful method for the synthesis of nitrogen-based heterocycles.⁵²⁷⁻⁵²⁹ Pyrrole 441 was synthesized via azomethine ylide formation and subsequent rearrangement. Thus, catalytic decomposition of diazo ketone 437 produced the carbonyl ylide 438 which isomerized to the azomethine ylide 439. 1,3-Dipolar cycloaddition and subsequent 1,3-alkoxy shift generated

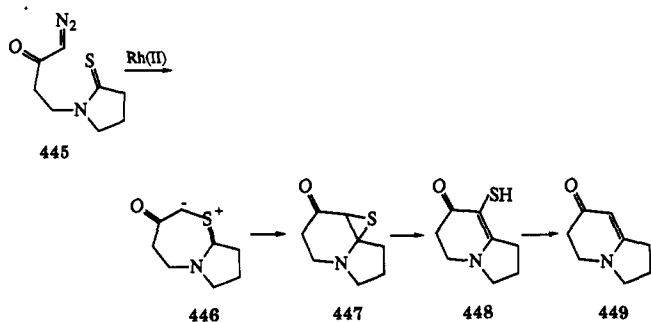
Scheme 294



Scheme 295



Scheme 296



the tricyclic dihydropyrrolizine 440 which fragmented to produce pyrrole 441 (Scheme 294).⁵²⁷⁻⁵²⁹

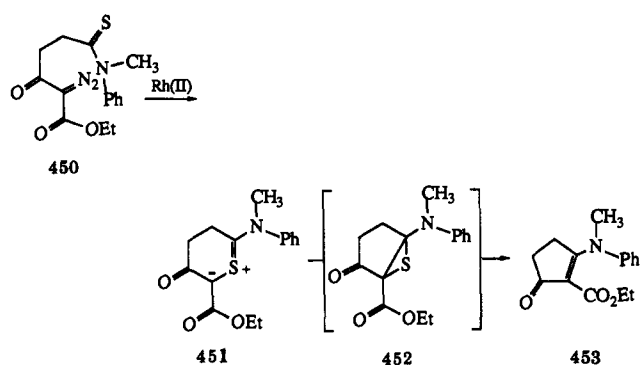
Thiocarbonyl ylides have been the subject of much interest in recent years, due to their potential role as intermediates in a variety of reactions, including the formation of episulfides and novel heterocyclic ring systems. One efficient method for the generation of thiocarbonyl ylides involves the addition of carbenoid onto the sulfur atom of a thiocarbonyl group. Takano and co-workers⁵³⁰ have reported the intermolecular formation of the thiocarbonyl ylide via a diazocarbonyl intermediate. Reaction of (*R*)-5-[(benzyloxy)methyl]-tetrahydro-2-furanthione (442) with the diazocarbonyl compound 443 in the presence of rhodium(II) acetate afforded the 2-(acylmethylene)tetrahydrofuran derivative 444 in good yield (Scheme 295).

Danishefsky and co-workers⁵³¹⁻⁵³⁵ reported the construction of nitrogen heterocyclic compounds via the thiocarbonyl ylide formation process. Intramolecular reaction of the keto carbenoid derived from diazo ketone 445 gave the cyclic thiocarbonyl ylide 446. Cyclization then led to 447, which was isomerized to product 448; the latter was transformed to dihydropyridone 449 by treatment with partially deactivated W-2 Raney nickel (Scheme 296).

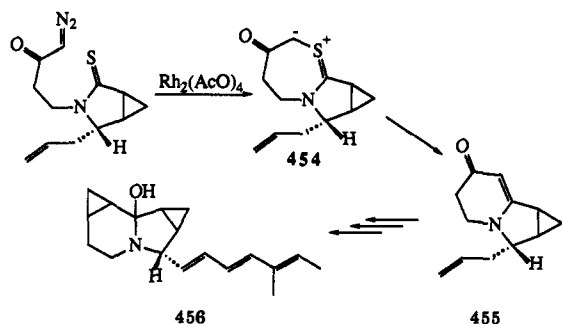
Similarly, Padwa and co-workers reported that thiocarbonyl ylide 451 derived from α -diazo- β -keto ester 450, cyclizes to produce a transient episulfide 452, which subsequently eliminates sulfur to give vinylogous amide 453 (Scheme 297).⁵³⁶

A key step in Danishefsky's total synthesis of indolizomycin (456)⁵³⁴ involved the formation of thio-

Scheme 297



Scheme 298



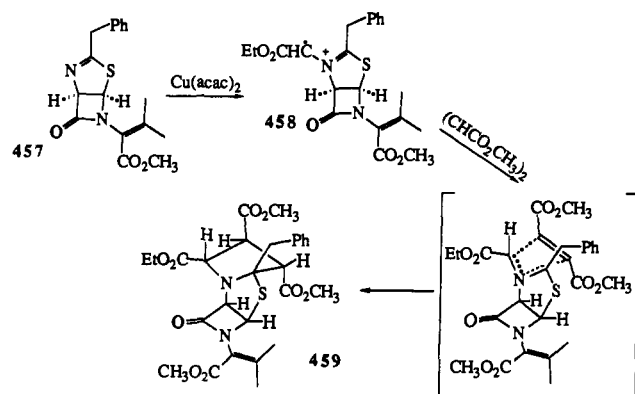
carbonyl ylide 454, which subsequently afforded vinylogous amide 455 (Scheme 298).

4. Reactions of Nitrogen Ylides Derived from Diazocarbonyl Precursors

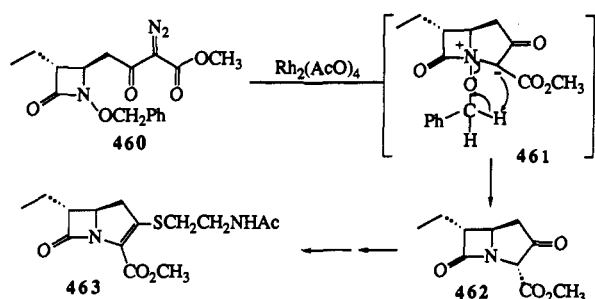
Azomethine ylides undergo facile 1,3-dipolar cycloadditions with π -bonds to give pyrrolidines which are useful in the synthesis of alkaloids. One simple method for the generation of the azomethine ylide involves the addition of carbenoid to a C-N bond. In some cases it can be prepared via isomerization of carbonyl ylides, which in turn are available from the catalytic decomposition of appropriate diazocarbonyl compounds.⁵³⁷ The reaction of thiazoloazetidinone 457 with carbenoids and subsequent 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition has been investigated by Thomas and co-workers.⁵³⁸ Thus, treatment of 457 with ethyl diazoacetate in the presence of a copper catalyst and dimethyl fumarate afforded adduct 459 stereoselectively. This sequence involves the addition of the carbenoid onto the thiazoline nitrogen to form the azomethine ylide 458, which undergoes 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition with dimethyl fumarate from the less hindered side of 458 (Scheme 299).

The intramolecular reaction of carbenoids derived from α -diazo- β -keto esters with an *N*-alkoxy β -lactam provides a novel ring-forming methodology. This cyclization protocol involves interaction of an initially generated carbenoid with the *N*-alkoxy lactam electron lone pair to form the ylide. Abstraction of a proton from the alkoxy group, followed by carbonyl formation and N-O bond cleavage, affords the cyclized product. Miller and co-workers^{539,540} have applied this methodology to the asymmetric synthesis of a key intermediate for the preparation of β -lactam antibiotic PS-5 463. Thus, rhodium-catalyzed cyclization of optically active diazocarbonyl 460 afforded carbapenam 462, which was

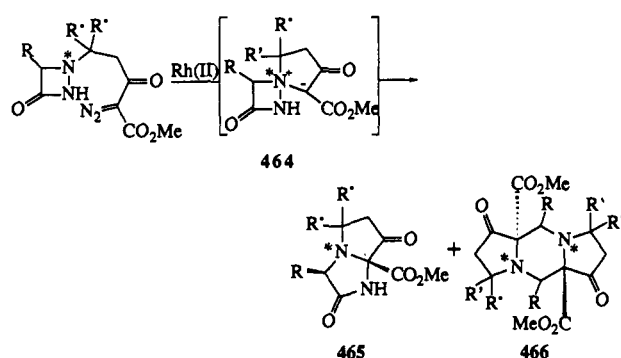
Scheme 299



Scheme 300



Scheme 301

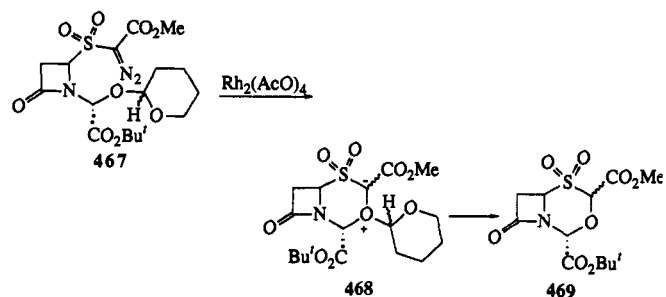


then converted to 463.⁵⁴¹ The formation of the intermediate nitrogen-based ylide 461 was the key step of this cyclization (Scheme 300).

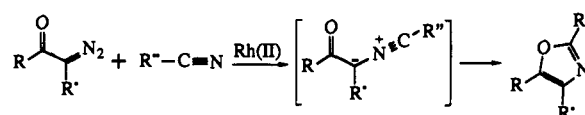
Rhodium(II)-catalyzed decomposition of the diazocarbonyl in Scheme 301 resulted in two products, 465 and 466.⁵⁴² Both products appear to result from formation of ylide 464 in which the carbenoid bonds to the more nucleophilic of the two nitrogen atoms (starred in 464). Product 465 is that of sigmatropic rearrangement of the ylide, whereas product 466 may result from fragmentation of the ylide followed by dimerization. There was no evidence of product arising from N-H insertion into the amide group (Scheme 301).

The formation of nitrogen ylides strongly depends on the nature of the diazocarbonyl precursor, although, in some cases, stereochemical or steric effects may inhibit intramolecular ylide formation. Rhodium(II)-catalyzed decomposition of the diazocarbonyl 467 gave the oxacepham 469 which is the result of formation of the oxygen ylide 468 rather than a nitrogen ylide. The ylide may decompose by proton abstraction leading to fragmentation to the oxacepham and dihydropyran (Scheme 302).⁵⁴³

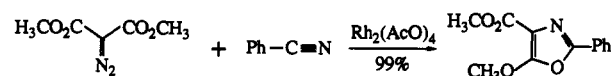
Scheme 302



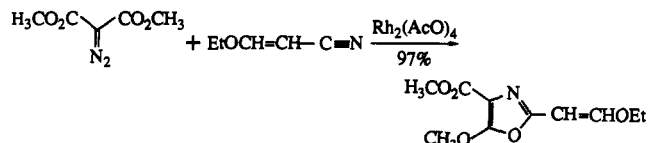
Scheme 303



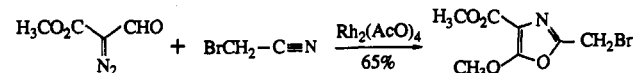
Scheme 304



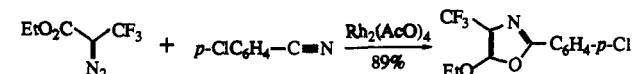
Scheme 305



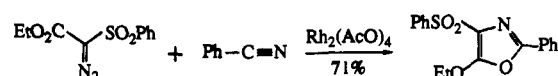
Scheme 306



Scheme 307

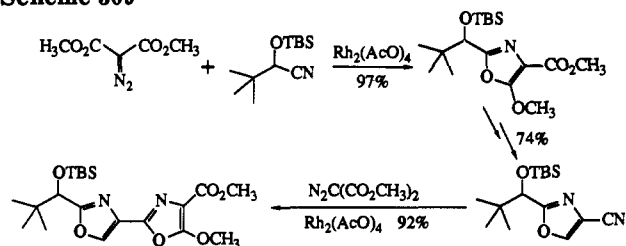


Scheme 308



Diazocarbonyl compounds react with nitriles under diverse reaction conditions to produce oxazoles.^{544,545} Lewis acid-promoted reaction of α -diazocarbonyl compounds with nitriles to give oxazoles will be reviewed in section III.J. Transition metal-catalyzed decomposition of diazocarbonyl compounds in nitrile solvents provide direct access to oxazoles. Rhodium salts as catalysts produce the highest yield.⁵⁴⁶⁻⁵⁵² Kinetic studies of the diazo compound in the presence of nitrile by using the laser flash photolysis technique have shown that the reaction involves the formation of nitrile ylide.⁵⁵³⁻⁵⁵⁵ A stable nitrile ylide in some cases can be isolated from reaction of a diazo compound with nitrile.⁵⁵⁶ It is now believed that carbenoids derived from the diazocarbonyl compounds react with nitriles to yield a nitrile ylide which then undergoes a cycloaddition reaction (Scheme 303). Some representative examples taken from the literature⁵⁴⁶⁻⁵⁵² are shown in Schemes 304-309.

Scheme 309

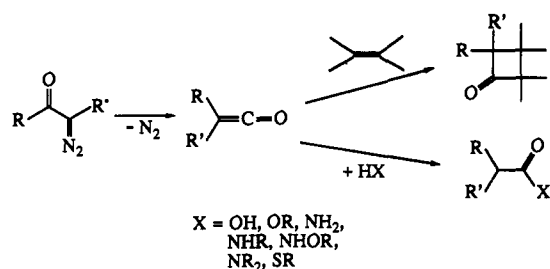


F. The Wolff Rearrangement

1. Introduction

In outline, the Wolff rearrangement of a diazo ketone is a specific 1,2-rearrangement, accompanying or following loss of nitrogen, to a ketene which may undergo further reactions such as nucleophilic attack by water, alcohols or amines, or cycloaddition to unsaturated systems (Scheme 310). Wolff discovered the rear-

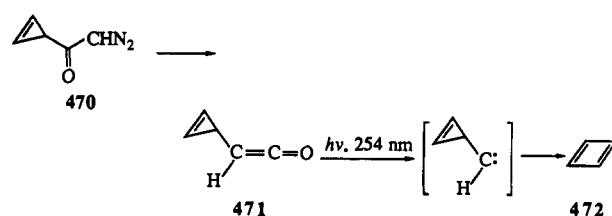
Scheme 310



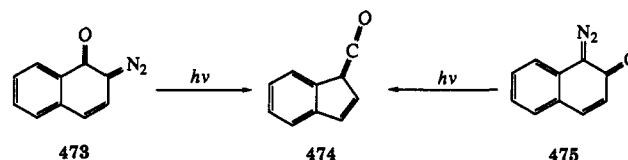
angement in 1912,⁵⁵⁷ many years before reliable synthetic routes to acyclic and alicyclic α -diazo ketones became available. When the methods of diazomethane acylation and diazo transfer were introduced the potential of the Wolff rearrangement was quickly appreciated.^{1b,558-568} The literature is replete with examples of its use, not just as a step in the Arndt-Eistert homologation reaction, but also as a powerful means of imposing angle strain on cyclic systems through ring contraction and, more recently, as a means of generating highly unstable systems in isolated circumstances at low temperatures where they can be scrutinized spectroscopically.

Rearrangement may be initiated by thermolysis, photolysis, or metal ion catalysis, the latter two being the more widely employed. An important mechanistic question, which has received widespread experimental and theoretical examination, centers on whether loss of nitrogen and rearrangement occur sequentially or in concert. The question of ketene formation is long settled and very unstable ketenes can now be generated at low temperatures. Maier,⁵⁶⁹ for example, has shown that cyclopropenyl ketene 471 can be produced on matrix photolysis of diazo ketone 470 and observed to decarbonylate to cyclobutadiene 472 (Scheme 311). Other examples of similar studies include those of Pacansky^{570,571} and Turro⁵⁷² on production, photolytically at 77 K, of indenylketenes 474 from diazonaphthalenones 473 or 475 in which products were identified spectroscopically by infrared and ultraviolet spectroscopy (Scheme 312). These studies, although confirming ketene formation, do not comment on the nature of the preceding steps.

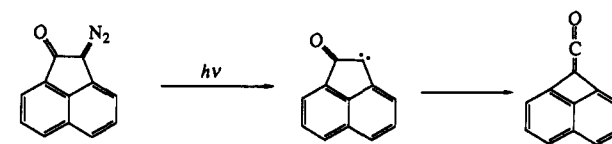
Scheme 311



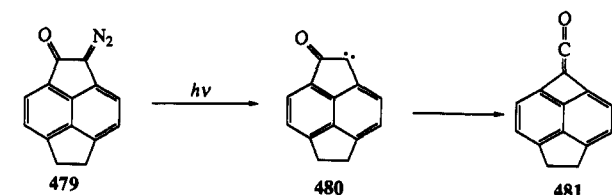
Scheme 312



Scheme 313



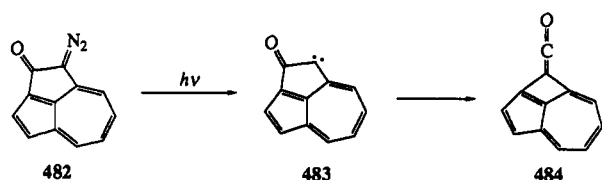
Scheme 314



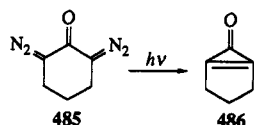
The most illuminating study of the photochemically induced Wolff rearrangement was that of Chapman and co-workers⁵⁷³ who combined matrix isolation with low-temperature spectroscopy to follow the decomposition pathways of diazo ketones 476, 479, and 482. These precursors were chosen wisely for Shechter⁵⁷⁴ and Trost^{575,576} had already found that increasing the transition-state energy for ring contraction in similar systems tends to inhibit Wolff rearrangement. The absence of rearrangement products from diazo ketone 476, either thermally or photochemically at ordinary temperatures, suggested that this precursor should be an ideal substrate for imposing increasingly severe strain limitations. These expectations were fulfilled: employing photochemical extrusion of nitrogen from diazo ketones 476, 479, and 482 in a matrix at 10–15 K, Chapman obtained spectroscopic evidence for the formation of keto carbenes 477, 480, and 483 which were further characterized by trapping experiments with oxygen and carbon monoxide. Further irradiation of these keto carbenes led to Wolff rearrangement (477 \rightarrow 478; 480 \rightarrow 481; 483 \rightarrow 484). These transformations thus represent the first clear-cut examples of nonconcerted Wolff rearrangement (Schemes 313–315).

The formation of cyclopropenones from bis diazo ketones followed from a suggestion by Trost⁵⁷⁷ to the effect that the product composition from photolysis of 485 was best accommodated by a bicyclopropenone intermediate 486. This suggestion gained considerable support when Trost isolated diphenylcyclopropenone 488 from the acyclic precursor 487 (Schemes 316 and

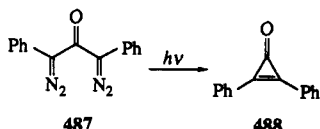
Scheme 315



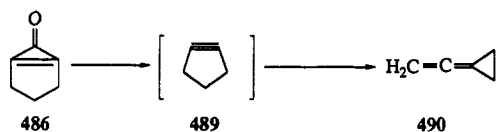
Scheme 316



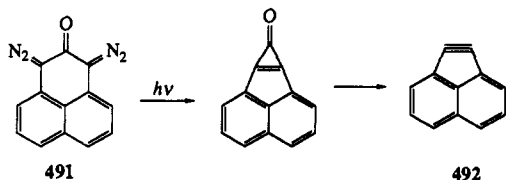
Scheme 317



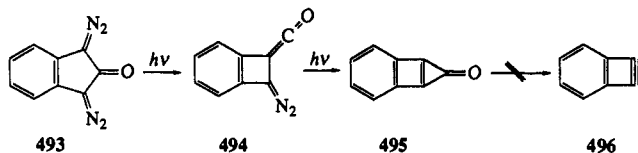
Scheme 318



Scheme 319



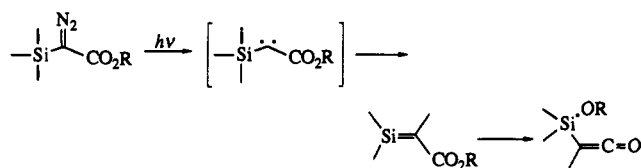
Scheme 320



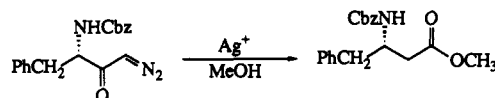
317). Chapman⁵⁷⁸ subsequently applied the low-temperature matrix-isolation technique to these systems and, commencing with 485 at 8 K, was able to observe by IR spectroscopy the changes illustrated in Scheme 318, terminating in a stable allenic product 490 which was assumed to have been formed from cyclopentyne 489 via a 1,3-sigmatropic shift, although this intermediate was not detected (Scheme 318).

Arguing that a cycloalkyne intermediate which did not have access to a 1,3-sigmatropic shift should have a greater lifetime, Chapman repeated the study with the tricyclic bis diazo ketone 491, photolysis of which could be followed in well-resolved stages by IR analysis (Scheme 319). The cycloalkyne 492 was indeed observed, and it was further characterized by its reactions with water, oxygen, and itself (trimerization). Recently, Tomioka⁵⁷⁹ and his co-workers have carried out an investigation of photodecomposition of 1,3-bis(diazo)-indan-2-one (493). The diazo ketene 494 derived from the Wolff rearrangement in an Ar matrix at 10 K, was converted photolytically to the cyclopropenone 495. However, the synthesis of benzocyclobutenyne 496 from 495 was not successful (Scheme 320).

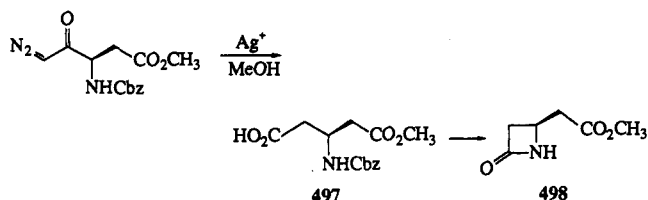
Scheme 321



Scheme 322



Scheme 323



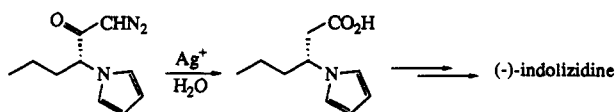
Among other notably unstable systems that have been probed via Wolff rearrangement are molecules containing the silicon-carbon double bond. Ando⁵⁸⁰ suggested originally that photolysis of (trimethylsilyl)-diazoacetates proceeds via keto carbene intermediates, Wolff rearrangement of a methyl group then forming an unsaturated silicon-carbon bond as shown in Scheme 321; additional evidence, gained later, supports this interpretation.⁵⁸¹⁻⁵⁸⁶

2. Synthetic Applications

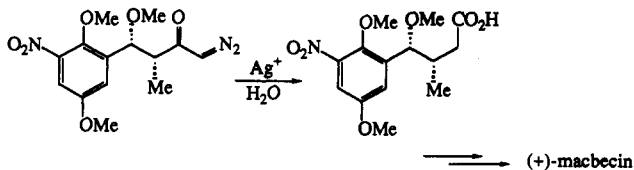
We now return to the synthetic applications of Wolff rearrangement. The key feature of Wolff rearrangement is the formation of ketene. The subsequent reaction of the ketene is determined by its structure and the reaction conditions. In the following, a selection of examples from the recent literature is divided into four subsections to illustrate the versatility of Wolff rearrangement in modern organic synthesis.

a. Arndt-Eistert Homologation and Related Reactions. The Arndt-Eistert synthesis, in effect, is a one-carbon homologation for which many hundreds of examples have been published. Silver ion catalysis or photolysis are the favored methods for effecting the reaction. Newman and Beale⁵⁸⁷ developed a procedure for carrying out the reaction in homogeneous solution under mild conditions. The catalytic system involves a solution of silver benzoate in triethylamine. Under these conditions, the reactions of chiral diazo ketones are also completely stereospecific with retention of configuration. Many of the β -amino acids which have served as replacement residues in studies of the biological activity of peptide analogues have been prepared via Arndt-Eistert synthesis.⁵⁸⁸⁻⁵⁹¹ Scheme 322 shows the synthesis of Cbz-protected β -phenylalanine methyl ester.⁵⁹² β -Amino acid formation via the Arndt-Eistert reaction has shown considerable synthetic utility in natural product synthesis. β -Amino acid 497 derived from D-aspartic acid via Arndt-Eistert homologation served as the chiral building block in the construction of 2-azetidinone 498 (Scheme 323).⁵⁹³ Two recent examples of Arndt-Eistert homologation in the total

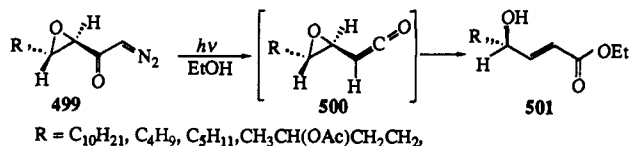
Scheme 324



Scheme 325



Scheme 326



synthesis of natural products are shown in Schemes 324⁵⁹⁴ and 325.⁵⁹⁵

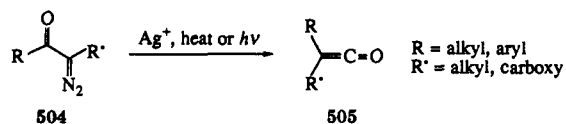
Epoxy diazomethyl ketones of type 499 undergoes an interesting photoinduced rearrangement leading to γ-hydroxy α,β-unsaturated ester.^{596,597} Initially, an epoxy ketene 500 is formed, which subsequently reacts with an alcoholic solvent to give a hydroxyalkene ester 501 (Scheme 326). Optically active diazo ketone 499 can be prepared from an allylic alcohol using the Sharpless epoxidation, with subsequent oxidation to the corresponding oxiranecarboxylic acid and conversion to diazo ketone 499 via standard procedures. This γ-hydroxy α,β-unsaturated ester formation methodology has been applied in the total synthesis of various naturally occurring macrocyclic lactones.^{598–603}

Extension of the Arndt–Eistert homologation to the open-chain diazo ester 502 and diazoamide 503 systems,



in general, affords lower yield of products due to the alkoxy and amino group being less favored migrating groups. These transformations⁵⁶⁶ have received much less attention synthetically due to the competing reactions of the carbene precursor. The α-diazocarbonyl of type 504, bearing two substituted functional groups other than hydrogen, also undergoes Wolff rearrangement to form ketene 505 (Scheme 327).^{604–607}

Scheme 327



Unsymmetrical 2-diazo-1,3-dicarbonyl compounds of general type 506 can give rise to two ketene products (Scheme 328) under Wolff rearrangement^{608–611} and an

Scheme 328

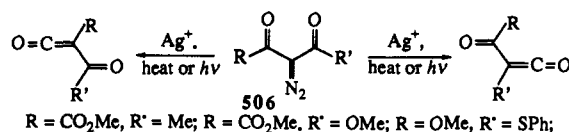


Table 4. Ring Contraction Strategy in Synthesis

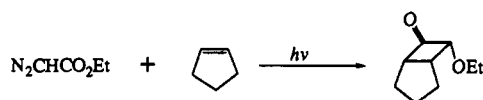
entry	Diazocarbonyl	Product	Target molecule	Ref.
1				612
2				613 614
3				615
4				616
5				617
6				618 619
7				620
8				610 611
9				621

example involving ring contraction is shown in Table 4, entry 8.^{610,611}

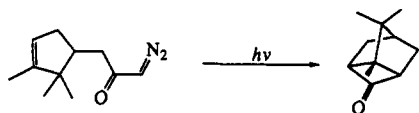
b. Ring Contraction Reactions. Application of the Wolff rearrangement to ring contraction has proved an effective methodology for the synthesis of strained isolable systems at less extreme temperatures. Although there are no limitations in the formation of various ring sizes via the Wolff rearrangement protocol, very few examples of the formation of three-membered rings and large cyclic systems have been reported. Some examples have been discussed in sections III.F.1. A selection of examples from the recent literature is summarized in Table 4.

Four-membered carbocyclic and heterocyclic systems are readily accessible from cyclopentyl precursors (entries 1–5). Entries 1⁶¹² and 2^{613,614} show how ring contraction has been employed to produce fused, polycyclic systems in which angle strain forces the central quaternary carbon atom more and more toward an energetically unfavorable planar geometry. Entry 4 is a particularly good example from the work of Eaton

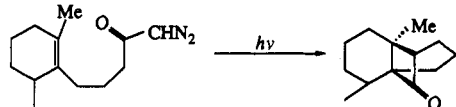
Scheme 329



Scheme 330



Scheme 331



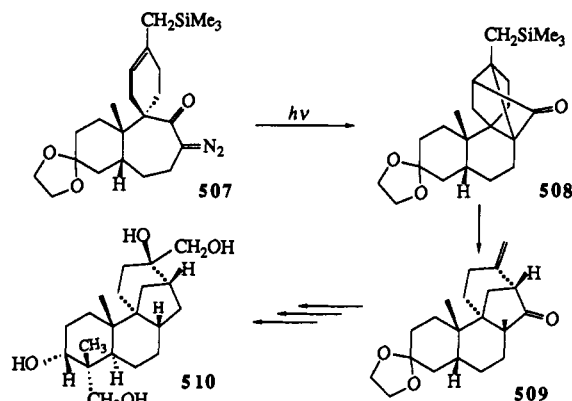
and co-workers,⁶¹⁶ the very unfavorable dihedral angle between the 1- and 7-positions of norbornane making the resulting cyclobutane derivative exceedingly distorted. Entry 561⁷ provided a new synthetic route to β -lactams that involves the photolytic ring contraction of 4-diazopyrrolidine-2,3-diones to 3-carboxy-2-azetidiones. Similarly, five-membered systems are also constructed efficiently by ring contraction (entries 6–9). Entry 76²⁰ illustrates the Wolff rearrangement in a bicyclic system containing a β -lactam in which the carbapenem skeleton can be prepared through a photolytic rearrangement of a readily available 2-diazoceph-3-em 1-oxide. Entry 86^{10,611} shows that a Wolff rearrangement applied to the diazo diketone in the presence of diallylamine gave a 1.6/1.0 mixture of two regioisomeric amides. The major regioisomeric amide was isolated in 56% yield and could further be transformed to the monoterpene alkaloid, (\pm)-actinidine. Finally, entries 36¹⁵ and 6^{18,619} through the syntheses of diasterane and pagodane demonstrates that the ring contraction strategy is an effective method in the construction of highly strained and chemically versatile carbon frameworks.

c. Wolff Rearrangement with Cycloaddition Reactions. Ketenes derived from the Wolff rearrangement of diazocarbonyls can undergo cycloaddition reactions. [2 + 2] thermal cycloadditions of ketenes to olefins are well understood and have been used for the synthesis of four-membered rings.⁶²² Both intermolecular⁶²³ and intramolecular^{624–629} additions of ketenes to olefins have been studied. Some representative examples are shown in Schemes 329–331.

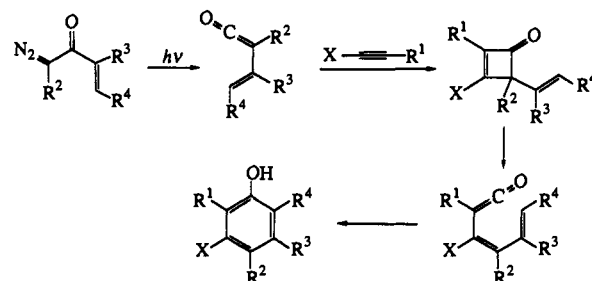
The combination of ring contraction and [2 + 2] cycloaddition reaction strategy has been used in Ireland's total synthesis of (\pm)-aphidicolin (510, Scheme 332).⁶³⁰ The photochemical decomposition of diazo ketone 507 afforded the corresponding silylcyclobutanone derivative 508 which subsequently rearranged to ketone 509. The ketone 509 contains the desired bicyclo[3.2.1]octane ring system of aphidicolin (510).

Danheiser and his co-workers⁶³¹ have invented a new aromatic annulation method which is based on the photochemical Wolff rearrangement of unsaturated α -diazo ketones to generate vinyl- or arylketenes, followed by a cascade of three pericyclic reactions (Scheme 333). A variety of highly substituted polycyclic aromatic and heteroaromatic compounds can be prepared using this method. The marine alkaloid

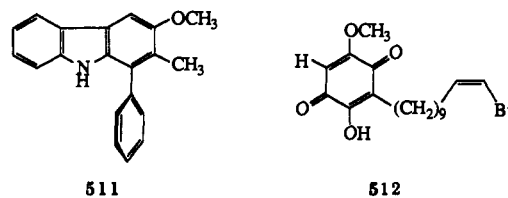
Scheme 332



Scheme 333

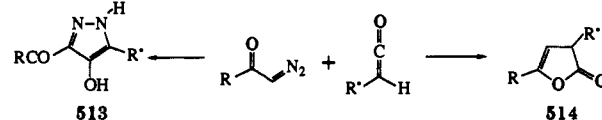


hyellazole (511)⁶³¹ and the host defense stimulant maesinin (512)⁶³² are two such examples.



Other types of double or triple bonds are suitable for trapping the ketene ensuing from Wolff rearrangement. The rather labile aldoketenes react with intact α -diazo ketone to give butenolides 514 or pyrazoles 513 (Scheme 334).⁵⁶⁶ Staudinger⁶³³ reported the first example of

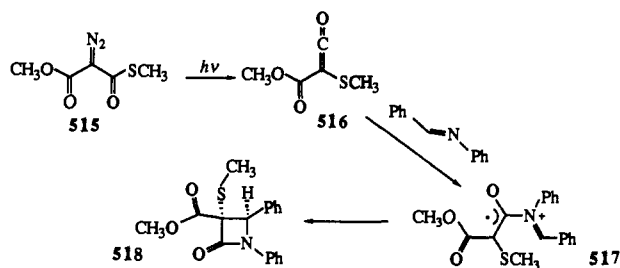
Scheme 334



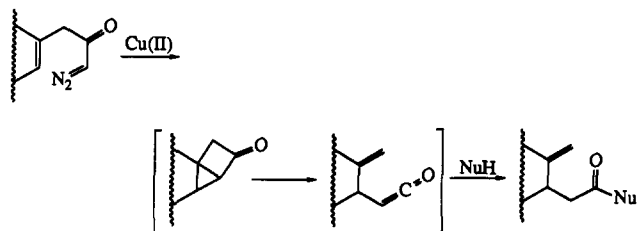
ketene addition to a carbon–nitrogen double bond to give a β -lactam. This cycloaddition reaction is a two-step process involving a zwitterionic species (517) as intermediate^{634,635} as shown in Scheme 335. The ketene 516 derived from the α -diazo thioester 515 adds to an imine acceptor, giving β -lactam 518 stereoselectivity.^{608,609} However, the ketene cycloaddition to π -bonds containing heteroatoms has scarcely been exploited synthetically.

d. The Vinylogous Wolff Rearrangement. From the late 1950s to early 1970s, a few research groups discovered that β,γ -unsaturated diazo ketones not only undergo the normal Wolff rearrangement leading to homologated acids but also yield, via novel skeletal rearrangement, abnormal isomeric products.^{636–642} A

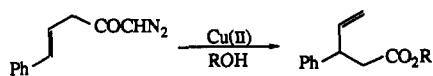
Scheme 335



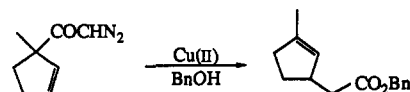
Scheme 336



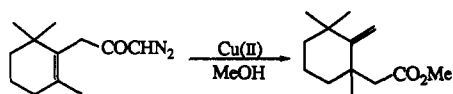
Scheme 337



Scheme 338



Scheme 339



systematic study of the decomposition of β,γ -unsaturated diazo ketones revealed that copper catalysts favor the abnormal product formation. This transformation, which has been termed the vinylogous Wolff rearrangement, represents a synthetic alternative to the Claisen-type rearrangement.⁶⁴³⁻⁶⁴⁶

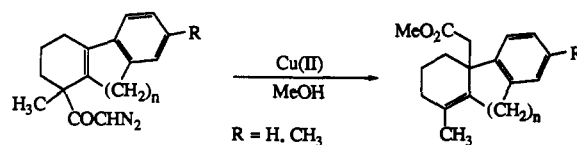
The initial reaction of the vinylogous Wolff rearrangement is probably a cyclopropanation reaction to give a bicyclic product. Fragmentation of this intermediate leads to a β,γ -unsaturated ketene which in turn can be captured by an available nucleophile to afford the γ,δ -unsaturated carboxylic acid derivative (Scheme 336).

The copper salt-catalyzed decomposition of monocyclic and acyclic β,γ -unsaturated diazo ketones in the presence of a nucleophile leading to the respective γ,δ -unsaturated carboxylic acid derivatives has been extensively studied.⁵⁹⁸⁻⁶⁰¹ Some representative examples are shown in Schemes 337-339.

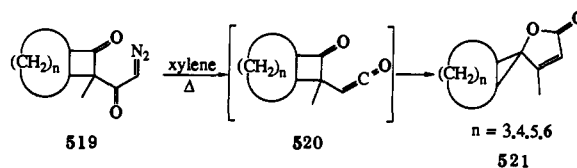
To rigid β,γ -unsaturated diazo ketone systems, the vinylogous Wolff rearrangement is also applicable.⁶⁴⁷⁻⁶⁵⁰ Scheme 340 shows the flexibility of the vinylogous Wolff rearrangement in the introduction of an angularly functionalized two-carbon residue from appropriately substituted polycyclic β,γ -unsaturated diazo ketones.^{648,649}

e. Miscellaneous. Among the applications that do not fall into the preceding categories are the thermal rearrangement of 2-(diazocetyl)cyclobutanones and

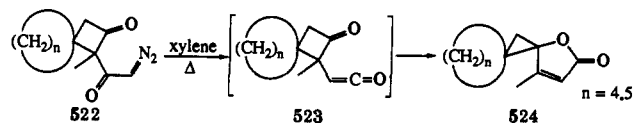
Scheme 340



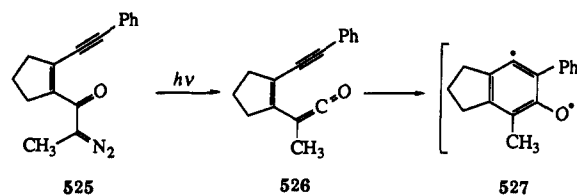
Scheme 341



Scheme 342



Scheme 343



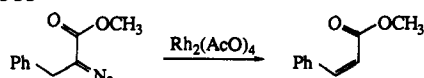
the formation of ene-yne-ketene for DNA cleavage. Miller and co-workers⁶⁵¹ have reported the development of a synthetic route to a variety of substituted α -ketenylcyclobutanones (520 and 523) from the pyrolysis or photolysis of corresponding 2-[(diazomethyl)carbonyl]cyclobutanone derivatives (519 and 522). Facile thermal rearrangement of the α -ketenylcyclobutanones (520 and 523) gave the corresponding 5-spirocyclopropyl- $\Delta^{\alpha,\beta}$ -butenolides (521 and 524). The yield of the rearrangement product is high, and the reaction is completely stereospecific (Schemes 341 and 342). Recently an example of photoinduced DNA cleavage by diazo ketone (525) containing an ene-yne moiety has been reported (Scheme 343).⁶⁵² DNA cleavage is probably due to the hydrogen abstraction from the DNA sugar backbone by $\sigma\text{-sp}^2$ diradical 527 spontaneously formed from ene-yne-ketene 526.

G. β -Hydride Elimination Leading to Alkene Formation

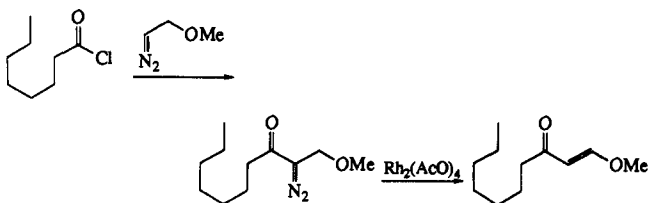
Metal-catalyzed decomposition of a diazo ketone or diazo ester containing a β -hydrogen atom can lead rapidly to alkene formation. In some cases the reaction takes this course exclusively, but examples are known in which it occurs competitively with another catalyzed process such as Wolff rearrangement, C-H insertion or cyclopropanation. In the former category Ganem and co-workers⁶⁵³ found that certain acyclic α -diazo esters on exposure to rhodium(II) acetate in benzene produced *cis*-enoates, an illustrative example being the quantitative conversion to *cis*-methyl cinnamate shown in Scheme 344.

Hudlicky and his co-workers⁶⁵⁴ have developed a general synthesis of β -methoxy-enones, presumably also

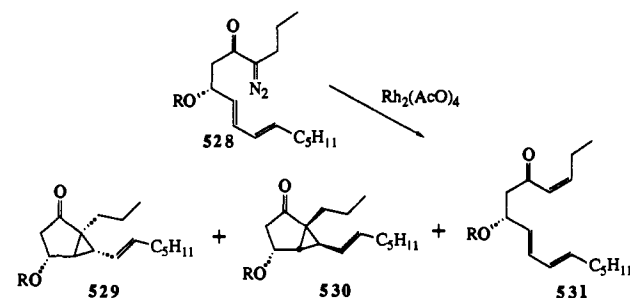
Scheme 344



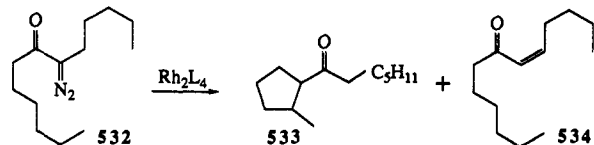
Scheme 345



Scheme 346



Scheme 347



via β -elimination of an intermediate carbenoid, from 2-diazo-1-methoxyethyl ketones. These precursors, obtained from the acyl chloride and 2-diazo-1-methoxyethane, on treatment with rhodium(II) acetate in benzene furnished *trans*-methoxy-enones exclusively. In the example shown in Scheme 345 no competing C-H insertion was observed.

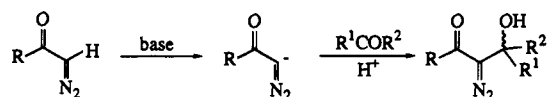
In contrast, Taber and his co-workers have found examples in which cyclopropanation³³⁰ or C-H insertion²⁷⁴ competes with β -elimination. In the course of an enantioselective synthesis of (-)-PGE₂ methyl ester, Taber found that rhodium(II) acetate catalyzed the conversion of diazo ketone 528 in Scheme 346 into the cyclopropanes 529 and 530 (55% yield), whereas when the catalyst was rhodium(II) trifluoroacetate the sole product 531 (in 90% yield) was that of elimination. That the nature of the ligand on the rhodium(II) catalyst had an influence on the extent of β -elimination was also demonstrated in the conversion of diazo ketone 532 in Scheme 347 into the C-H insertion product 533 and the elimination product 534: with rhodium acetate there was a 70/30 preference for 533 while with the corresponding trifluoroacetate there was a 62/38 preference for 534. In both these examples β -elimination led to *cis*-alkene exclusively. These and other results suggest that β -elimination is favored by electron-withdrawing ligands on the metal. Early examples of β -elimination in competition with Wolff rearrangement were reported by Franzen,⁶⁵⁵ although the geometry of the alkenes formed is not reported.

H. Reactions with Aldehydes and Ketones

In reactions of aldehydes and ketones with keto carbenoids (section III.E.3) the carbonyl functions act as a nucleophile in donating electrons to the electron-deficient carbenoid center. There are other reactions of aldehyde and ketones in which the carbon-oxygen double bond participates in a cycloaddition (see section III.I). In yet another group to be discussed here, the carbonyl component acts as the electrophile while the diazocarbonyl acts in a nucleophilic capacity. There are two broad categories of such reactions of α -diazocarbonyls with aldehydes and ketones, one an aldol-type addition promoted by base with retention of the diazo function, the other a related process of β -dicarbonyl formation with loss of nitrogen which requires a Lewis acid. In many cases the products of the former can be converted into those of the latter by exposure to catalytic amounts of rhodium(II) acetate. Purely thermal reactions with aldehydes and ketones are known, but they tend to be unselective and are of only limited use in synthesis.

For aldol-type additions the diazocarbonyl precursor must be capable of base-promoted ionization to the α -diazocarbonyl anion (Scheme 348). There follows

Scheme 348

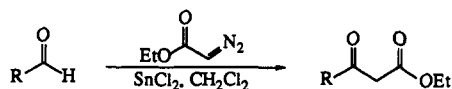


addition of the anion to the aldehyde or ketone. Early work by Schölkopf and Frasnelli⁶⁵⁶ described the formation of ethyl lithiodiazoacetate from ethyl diazoacetate and *n*-butyllithium at low temperature and its addition to several carbonyl compounds. Shortly thereafter Wenkert and McPherson^{657,658} examined a range of bases for the deprotonation step, including *n*-butyllithium and lithium diisopropylamide (LDA), and recommended that a dilute solution of potassium hydroxide in methanol or ethanol was the combination of choice. However, in more recent studies, especially those following the work of Pellicciari and co-workers,⁶⁵⁹⁻⁶⁶⁷ LDA has been by far the most widely employed base for diazocarbonyl deprotonation. The Italian group has used lithiated diazo esters and diazo ketones to convert aldehydes and ketones into α -diazocarbonyl β -hydroxycarbonyl adducts suitable for subsequent transformations into nitrogen-free products, a particularly attractive version of the latter being β -dicarbonyl compounds produced by the catalytic action of rhodium(II) acetate. Examples of this methodology are summarized in Table 5, entry 1, showing the use of diazolithioacetone to transform β -cyclocitral into a β -diketone suitable for elaboration into β -damascone.^{664,665} α -Cyclocitral combines with ethyl diazolithioacetate to afford a product which on exposure to rhodium(II) acetate produces the β -keto ester in entry 2.⁶⁶⁰ The process is also applicable to ring expansion of cyclic ketones, an illustrative example (entry 3) being the transformation of 3-acetoxyestrone into a D-homoestrone derivative.⁶⁶⁷ Corey's synthesis of (\pm)-atractyligenin employed this two-step sequence to add a β -keto ester side chain to the bicyclic aldehyde in entry 4.⁶⁶⁸ The β -keto ester moiety was then used to set the scene for an intramolecular copper(II)-catalyzed

Table 5. Synthesis of β -Dicarbonyl Compounds

Entry	Reactants	Products
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Scheme 349



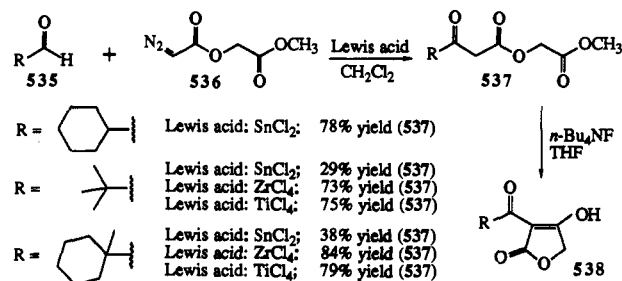
cyclopropanation by reintroducing a diazo group between the two carbonyl groups. Entries 5 and 6 demonstrate the application of this methodology to the elaboration of optically active amino acids using lithiated N-protected diazo amino ketones; these reactions have been shown to be free of racemization.¹⁶ Kim and co-workers⁶⁶⁹ in a detailed study of the second, catalyzed stage of the above processes have found that catalysis is not confined to rhodium(II) acetate. Other active salts include palladium and cobalt chloride and tris(triphenylphosphine)rhodium(I) chloride. Furthermore, the migratory aptitudes of the α - and α' -hydrogens in diazo adducts derived from unsymmetrical ketones were catalyst dependent. A final useful application of additions of lithiated diazocarbonyls is to be found in Moody's synthesis of oxygen, nitrogen, and sulfur heterocycles (see section III.A.4) where the acyclic precursors were conveniently prepared by addition of ethyl lithiodiazoacetate to γ - and δ -lactones, thio-lactones, and lactams.⁶⁷⁰

Acid-promoted reactions of aldehydes and ketones lead directly to nitrogen-free β -dicarbonyl products (Scheme 349). Examples employing ketonic substrates are more numerous than those with aldehydes, although the recent work of Holmquist and Roskamp⁶⁷¹ and of Padwa and co-workers⁶⁷² has demonstrated that aldehydes are efficiently converted into β -keto esters or β -diketones with diazocarbonyls in the presence of tin(II) chloride. A few representative examples are shown in Table 6. The process occurs readily in dichloromethane at or below room temperature and shows a sensitivity toward aldehyde structures sufficient to allow differential reaction between aliphatic (the more reactive) and aromatic aldehydes. For example, a

Table 6. Synthesis of β -Dicarbonyl Compounds via Tin(II) Chloride-Catalyzed Reaction

Reactants	Products (yield)

Scheme 350



reaction performed on a 1:1:1 mixture of benzaldehyde, 3-phenylpropionaldehyde, and ethyl diazoacetate gave a 1:30 ratio of β -keto esters at -15°C .⁶⁷¹ Yields of diketones were found to be significantly lower when aromatic aldehydes were used. For example, treatment of 1-diazo-4-phenylbutan-2-one with benzaldehyde in the presence of SnCl₂ afforded H-Cl insertion adducts rather than β -diketones. The preparation of β -keto ester from aldehydes has been used as a step in the synthesis of *ent*-cholesterol⁶⁷³ and (\pm)-leuhistin.⁶⁷⁴ Very recently, Nomura and co-workers⁶⁷⁵ have applied this Lewis acid-promoted β -keto ester formation protocol to the synthesis of γ -unsubstituted α -acyl- β -tetronic acids **538** (Scheme 350). They claimed that the Sn(II) catalytic reactions of tertiary aldehydes **535** with diazo ester **536** resulted in a poor yield of dicarbonyl products **537**, whereas the ZrCl₄ and TiCl₄ catalysts are quite effective in the reaction of sterically hindered aldehydes (Scheme 350).⁶⁷³

In later work Holmquist and Roskamp⁶⁷⁶ demonstrated that this Lewis acid-promoted reaction could be extended to include conversion of alkenes into β -keto esters, using ozonolysis to first generate the aldehyde which in turn condenses with ethyl diazoacetate. Here tin(II) chloride plays a dual role, acting as a reducing agent to convert the ozonide to the aldehyde and as a Lewis acid to assist the addition of diazo ester. Several examples of this two-stage transformation are shown in Table 7.

Among other novel addition reactions of diazo esters are Wittig-like olefinations mediated by a combination

Table 7. Conversion of Olefins to β -Keto Esters

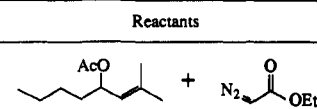
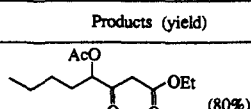

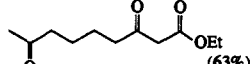
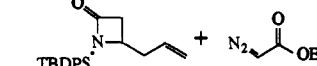
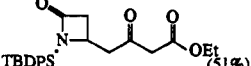
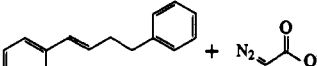
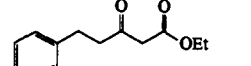
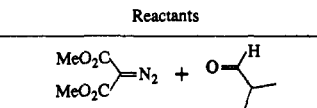
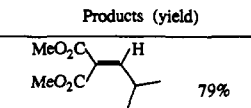
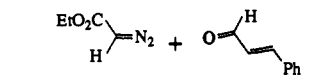
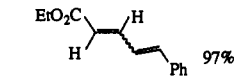
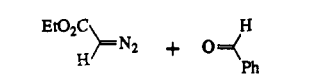
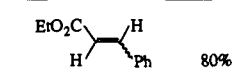
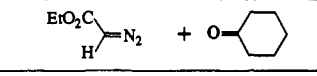
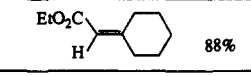
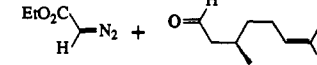
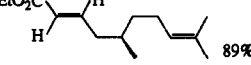
Reactants	Products (yield)
	 (80%)
	 (63%)
	 (51%)
	 (45%)

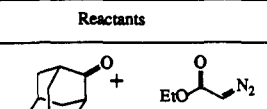
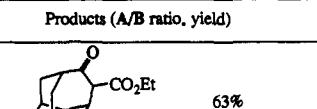
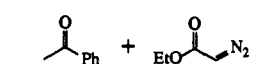
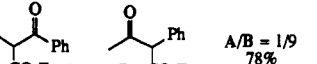
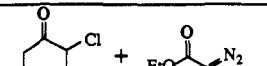
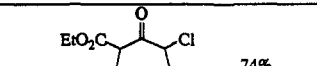
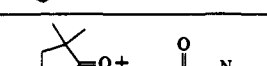
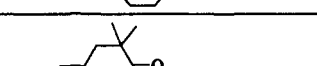

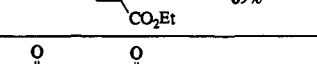
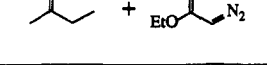
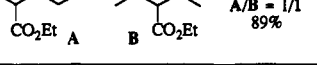
Table 8. Olefination of Diazocarbonyls with Carbonyl Compounds

Reactants	Products (yield)
	 79%
	 97%
	 80%
	 88%
	 89%

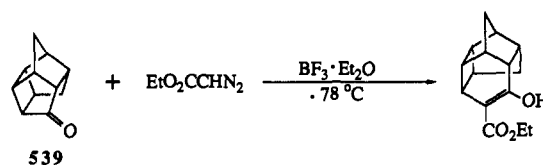
of tributylstibine and copper(I) iodide⁶⁷⁷ or catalyzed by methyltrioxorhenium.⁶⁷⁸ The former are also applicable to both aldehydes and ketones, whereas the latter appear to have been observed with aldehydes only. Examples of both processes are shown in Table 8.

Addition of diazocarbonyls to ketones promoted by Lewis acids has been used extensively as a means of homologation or ring expansion. The most widely employed Lewis acid appears to be boron trifluoride etherate, although Mock and Hartman⁶⁷⁹ have advocated the use of triethyloxonium fluoroborate. With unsymmetrical ketones, whether acyclic or cyclic, questions of regioselectivity rise in homologation due to different migratory aptitudes of the groups flanking the carbonyl function. Liu and co-workers⁶⁸⁰ studied the $\text{BF}_3 \cdot \text{Et}_2\text{O}$ -catalyzed addition of ethyl diazoacetate to a series of cycloalkanones with different substitution patterns at the α - and α' -positions and concluded that the migratory aptitudes were uniformly such that the less substituted carbon atom migrates preferentially. Studies by Mock and Hartman⁶⁷⁹ with triethyloxonium fluoroborate as catalyst revealed a similar trend in migratory aptitude in reactions which gave good to excellent yields of homologated ketones. Some examples taken from both studies are shown in Table 9. However, there are cases where the regiochemical outcome is catalyst dependent. Furthermore, recently studies on the Lewis acid-promoted ring homologation of ketone **539** with ethyl diazoacetate at lower temperatures shows higher regioselectivity (Scheme 351).⁶⁸¹

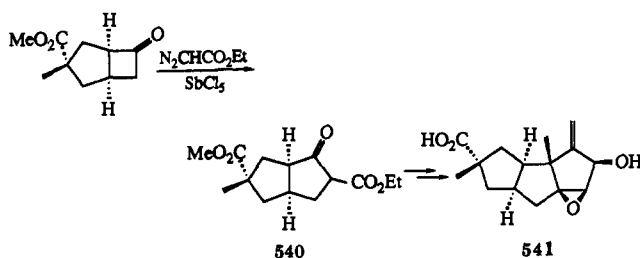
Table 9. Homologation of Ketones

Reactants	Products (A/B ratio, yield)
	 63%
	 A/B = 1/9 78%
	 74%
	 69%
	 A/B = 1/1 89%
	 A/B = 7/3 95%

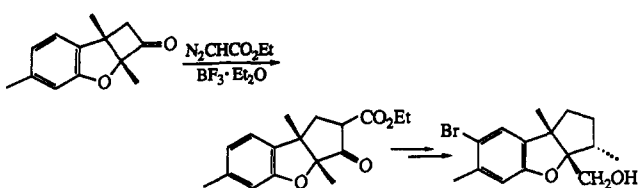
Scheme 351



Scheme 352



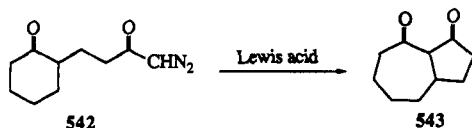
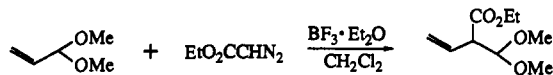
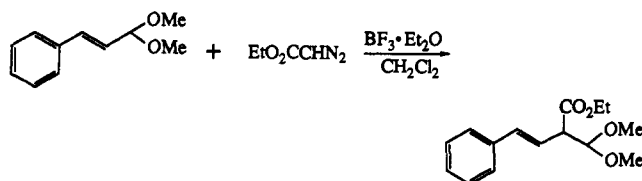
Scheme 353



Greene and co-workers⁶⁸² found, for example, that whereas addition of ethyl diazoacetate to the cyclobutanone in Scheme 352 with either boron trifluoride etherate or triethyloxonium fluoroborate as catalyst proceeded with poor selectivity, use of antimony pentachloride in dichloromethane resulted in a highly regioselective ring expansion to give the product **540** (Scheme 352). This ring-expansion adduct (**540**) was then transformed into hirsutic acid C (**541**). A similar application of cyclobutanone ring expansion has been used in a total synthesis of (\pm)-aplysin⁶⁸³ (Scheme 353). In this case, the cyclobutanone ring expansion was catalyzed by $\text{BF}_3 \cdot \text{Et}_2\text{O}$ regioselectively.

Table 10. Regiospecific Homologation of Unsymmetrical Ketones

Reactants	Products (yield)
	(62%)
	(68%)
	(61%)
	(67%)

Scheme 354**Scheme 355****Scheme 356**

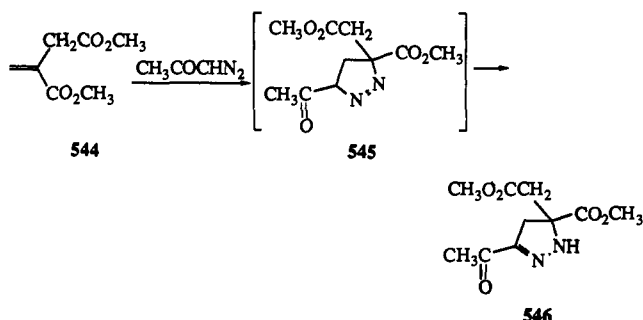
Dave and Warnoff⁶⁸⁴ have developed an approach to regiospecific homologation of unsymmetrical, unhindered ketones based on the imposition of a bias against migration of one of the two α -substituents. The procedure consists of preparation of a pure α -bromo or α -chloro ketone, reaction of this derivative with ethyl diazoacetate and boron trifluoride, and removal of the halogen by zinc reduction and removal of the ethoxycarbonyl group by heating with water in a sealed tube at 230 °C. The regiospecificity of the homologation rests on the electron-withdrawing power of the α -halogen atom which prevents migration of the carbon atom to which it is attached. Examples of this approach are shown in Table 10. Intramolecular ring expansion of ketones is known. Treatment of diazo ketone 542 with boron trifluoride etherate⁶⁷⁹ or tin(II) chloride⁶⁷² afforded the rearranged diketone 543 (Scheme 354). α,β -Unsaturated ketones and aldehydes are not amenable to homologation with diazocarbonyl compounds.⁶⁷⁹ Doyle's group, however, has found that the acetals of α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compounds do undergo homologation with ethyl diazoacetate in the presence of boron trifluoride etherate to produce, in good yields, β,γ -unsaturated acetals. Two examples of this transformation are illustrated in Schemes 355 and 356.⁶⁸⁵

I. Cycloaddition Reactions of Diazocarbonyls

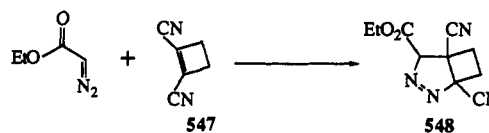
α -Diazocarbonyl compounds are capable of numerous intermolecular and intramolecular cycloadditions, as exemplified for cyclopropanation of alkenes and aromatics in sections III.C and III.D. In these processes bond formation takes place exclusively at the carbenic carbon. Other types of cycloaddition to be discussed in this section may occur directly onto the diazocarbonyl precursor with retention of nitrogen or via the keto carbenoid functionality as a 1,3-dipole. Cycloaddition via ketenes arising from Wolff rearrangement has been considered in section III.F.2.c.

1. Diazocarbonyl Compounds as 1,3-Dipoles in the [3 + 2] Cycloadditions⁶⁸⁶

In the absence of catalysts, a wide variety of α -diazocarbonyls undergo 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions with double bonds conjugated with carbonyl,⁶⁸⁷⁻⁶⁹¹ amine,⁶⁹² nitrile,⁶⁸⁷ nitro⁶⁹³ groups, or double bonds as a part of a strained ring system,⁶⁹⁴⁻⁶⁹⁸ without loss of nitrogen to furnish Δ^1 -pyrazolines. For example, reaction of dimethyl itaconate 544 and 1-diazo-2-propanone furnishes the Δ^1 -pyrazoline 545, which undergoes spontaneous tautomerization to afford the Δ^2 -pyrazoline 546 in good yield (Scheme 357).⁶⁹¹ The same type of

Scheme 357

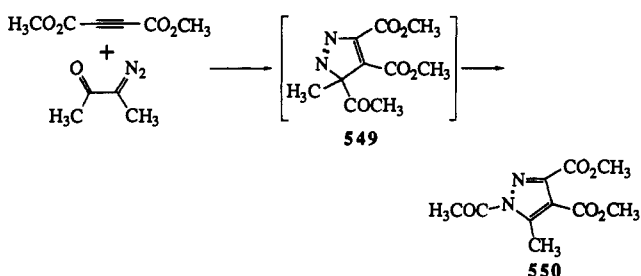
reaction has been observed in the reaction of 1-diazo-2-propanone with the enolate double bond generated from β -dicarbonyl compounds in the presence of base.⁶⁹⁹ Disubstituted cyclobutene 547 adds ethyl diazoacetate to give the cycloadduct 548 in 53% yield as shown in Scheme 358.⁶⁴⁷

Scheme 358

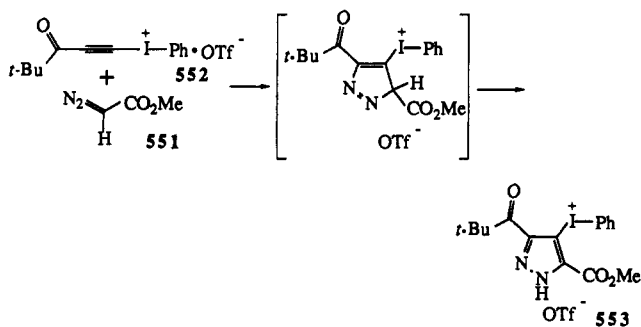
Similarly, 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions occur with carbon-carbon triple bonds conjugated with carbonyl groups.⁷⁰⁰⁻⁷⁰⁵ 2-Diazo-3-butanone reacts with dimethyl acetylene dicarboxylate to form the unstable pyrazolenine 549, which undergoes a transposition leading to N(2)-substituted pyrazole 550 by a specific [1,5]-migration of the acyl group to N(2) (Scheme 359).⁷⁰² Recently, Mass and co-workers⁷⁰⁵ have shown that the diazo esters such as 551 undergo [3 + 2]-cycloaddition to the (alkynyl)(phenyl)iodonium salt 552 to give a (4-pyrazolyl)phenyl iodonium salt 553 (Scheme 360).

Cycloaddition of α -diazocarbonyl compounds with hetero double or triple bonds is a minor process. In

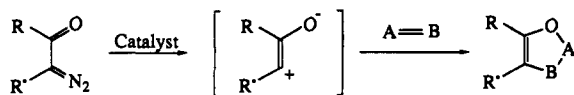
Scheme 359



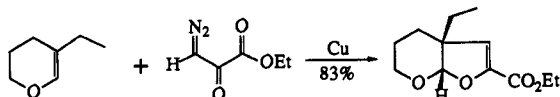
Scheme 360



Scheme 361



Scheme 362



many cases nucleophilic attack on the electrophilic C-X bond by the diazocarbonyl occurs instead of 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition.⁶⁸⁶

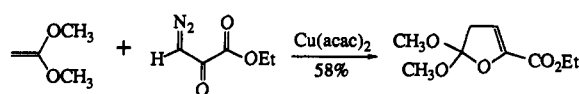
2. Cycloaddition with Participation of Both the Carbenic Carbon and the Carbonyl Oxygen Atoms

Carbenes and carbenoids derived from α -diazocarbonyl compounds can add to multiple bonds with participation of both the carbenic carbon and carbonyl oxygen to form five-membered heterocycles (Scheme 361). The reaction proceeds as a [3+2]-cycloaddition. Alternatively, the five-membered heterocyclic product may arise from thermal rearrangement of primary species derived from carbene (or carbenoid) interaction with multiple bonds. Whatever the mechanism, this transformation has been extensively used in the synthesis of dihydrofuran and furan.

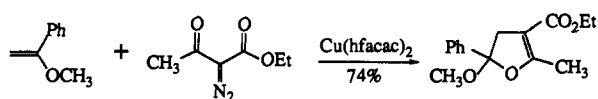
It is known that the carbenoid derived from the alkyl diazoacetates or diazomalones reacts with alkyl vinyl ethers to form β -oxycyclopropane adducts.⁷⁰⁶ By contrast, the reaction between alkyl vinyl ethers and certain diazo ketones, for example, alkyl 2-diazo-3-oxobutyrates or 3-diazo-2,4-pentandione, furnished dihydrofurans.⁷⁰⁷⁻⁷¹⁶ The dihydrofurans obtained from the cycloaddition can be further transformed, e.g. into furoic ester and furanones. Some representative examples are shown in Schemes 362-367.

Similarly, diazodimedone (554) reacts with substituted pyrrole 555 to give the cycloadduct 556 (Scheme

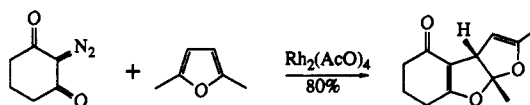
Scheme 363



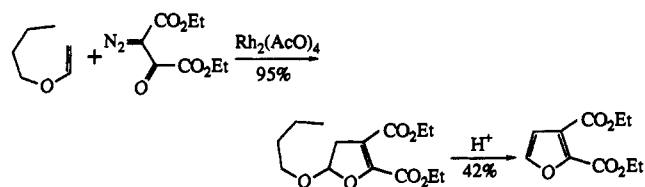
Scheme 364



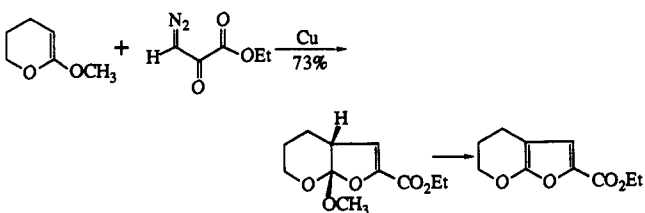
Scheme 365



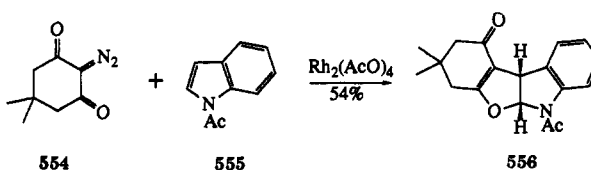
Scheme 366



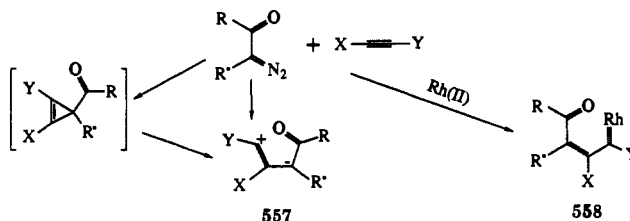
Scheme 367



Scheme 368

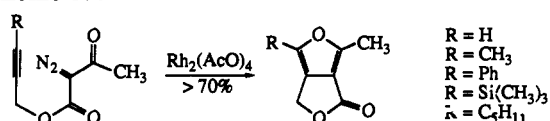


Scheme 369

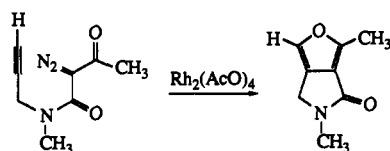


368).⁷¹⁶ Diazocarbonyl compounds with appropriate substituents can react with the carbon-carbon triple bond to afford corresponding substituted furans. Both inter- and intramolecular processes are possible. Intermediate 558,⁷¹⁷ derived from the addition of an initially formed metal carbenoid onto the alkyne unit, and the dipolar intermediate 557,⁷¹⁸ which is derived either by ring opening of an initially formed cyclopropane or directly from the reaction of a carbenoid with an alkyne, may be involved in the processes (Scheme 369). Some representative examples from the work of Padwa⁷¹⁷ and Davies⁷¹⁸ and their respective groups are shown in Schemes 370-372.

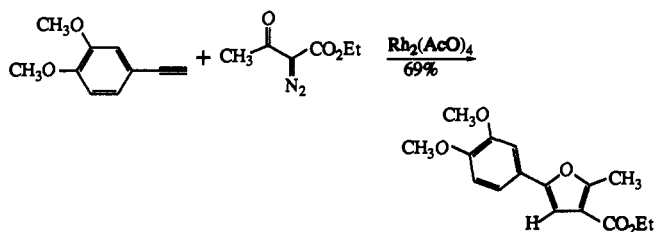
Scheme 370



Scheme 371



Scheme 372



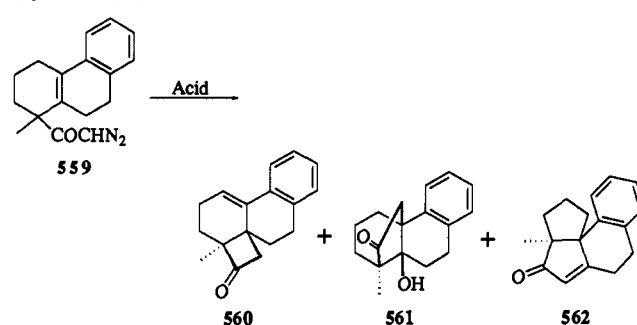
J. Acid-Catalyzed Cyclization of Unsaturated and Aromatic Diazo Ketones

Cyclization processes in which a new bond is formed by nucleophilic addition to an ionizing center provide important routes to carbocycles and heterocycles. Diazocarbonyls with suitably positioned internal nucleophiles display this type of behavior under acid catalysis. Nucleophiles include olefinic, acetylenic, and aromatic groups as well as heteroatoms such as oxygen, nitrogen, and sulfur. Of these, π -route cyclizations of alkenes and aromatics have had the most impact on synthesis, and this section is devoted to unsaturated and aromatic diazo ketones. Cyclizations involving heteroatom participation are included in the section on α,α -substitution.

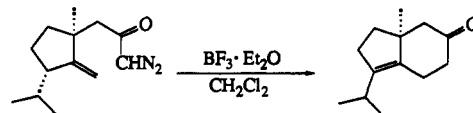
π -Route cyclization is believed to proceed via initial protonation (with Brønsted acids) or complexation (with Lewis acids) of the diazocarbonyl function followed by, or possibly accompanied by, π -electron participation in the very electrophilic species, leading to loss of nitrogen and a cyclized cation which leads to product, typically by proton elimination. π -Route cyclization has been applied very successfully, not just to simple carbocyclic systems, but to many multiring and bridged-ring molecules. The literature up to 1979 has been reviewed in detail by Burke and Grieco²⁶⁷ and Smith⁷¹⁹ has summarized his own work and that of Mander on multiple π -route cyclizations including aromatics. A few examples will suffice here to demonstrate the power of the process including recent variations.

Cyclobutanones are accessible; diazo ketone 559 furnishes the cyclized product 560 on treatment with either perchloric or fluoroboric acid in benzene or chloroform. However, the course of cyclization in this system is catalyst dependent: use of fluoroboric acid led to cyclopentanone 561 predominantly, whereas in nitromethane perchloric acid furnished 562, the product of cyclization and rearrangement (Scheme 373).⁷²⁰ Mehta's group^{721,722} have used π -route cyclization to construct the cyclopentanone ring of the hydrindanone shown in Schemes 374 and 375. The adducts 563 was

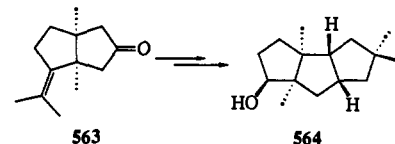
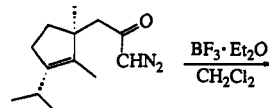
Scheme 373



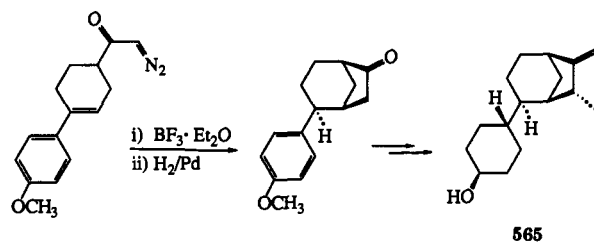
Scheme 374



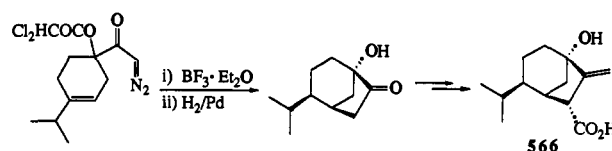
Scheme 375



Scheme 376



Scheme 377

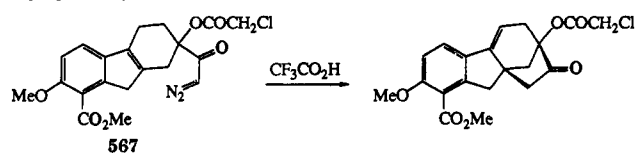


the key intermediate of the total synthesis of (-)-ceratopicanol (564).⁷²²

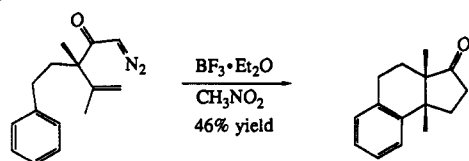
The most impressive application of this annulation process is undoubtedly Mander's synthesis of gibberellic acid.⁷²³ Following extensive studies of the scope of π -route cyclizations in bridged-ring systems, which included the synthesis of helminthosporic acid analogues, e.g. 565 and 566 (Schemes 376 and 377),⁷²⁴ Mander and co-workers⁷²³ applied the process to construction of the characteristic bicyclo[3.2.1]octane framework of gibberellic acid by trifluoroacetic acid-catalyzed cyclization of the diazo ketone 567 in Scheme 378.

Further aspects of π -route diazocarbonyl cyclizations are worthy of note in systems where more than one olefinic group participates and in systems in which the participating π -electrons are supplied by an aromatic ring. Smith and co-workers⁷²⁵ have provided several

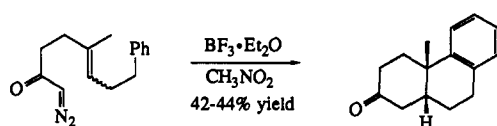
Scheme 378



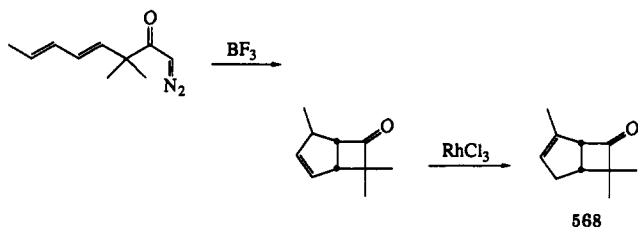
Scheme 379



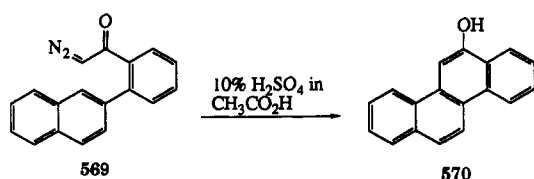
Scheme 380



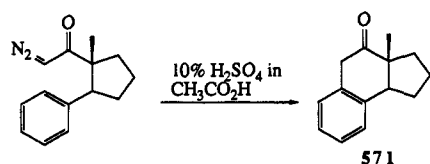
Scheme 381



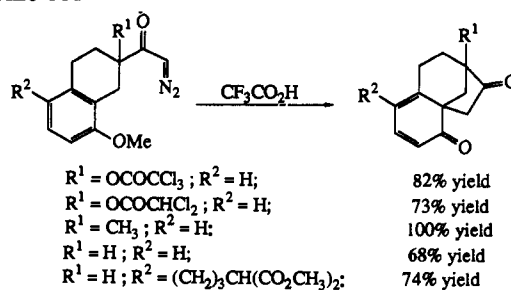
Scheme 382



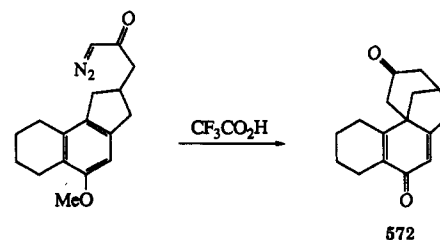
Scheme 383



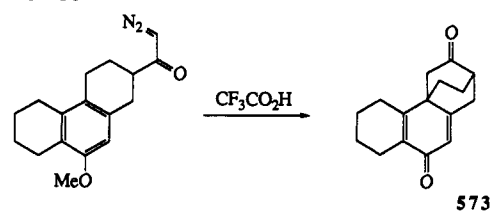
Scheme 384



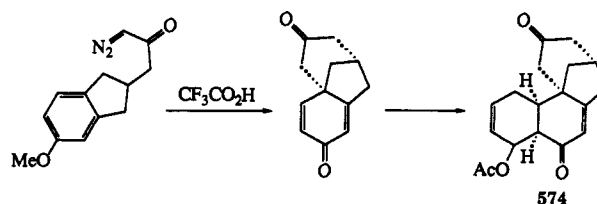
Scheme 385



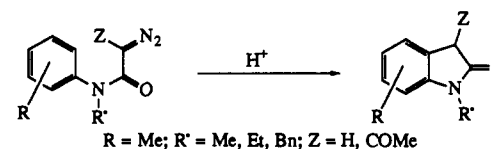
Scheme 386



Scheme 387



Scheme 388



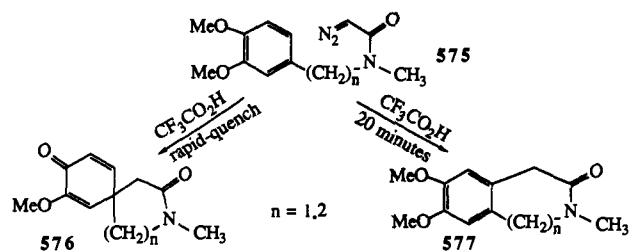
demonstrations of polyolefinic cationic cyclizations of α -diazo ketones. Two typical examples are shown in Schemes 379 and 380. The optimal combination of acid and solvent proved to be boron trifluoride etherate in nitromethane or dichloromethane. Small ring bicycles are also accessible, Hudlicky and Kutchan⁷²⁶ having demonstrated the construction of a cyclobutanone fused to a cyclopentene ring in their synthesis of (\pm)-filifolone (**568**, Scheme 381).

Aryl participation in acid-promoted diazo ketone decomposition has been known for many years. Early examples include the synthesis of 2-chrysenol (**570**) from the diazo ketone **569** in Scheme 382⁷²⁷ and of the tricyclic ketone **571** in Scheme 383,⁷²⁸ both reactions having been catalyzed by sulfuric acid in acetic acid. Numerous, more recent studies of π -route participation in aromatic precursors with appropriately placed hydroxy or methoxy groups confirm that this is a very versatile route to bridged-ring cyclohexadienones bearing angular

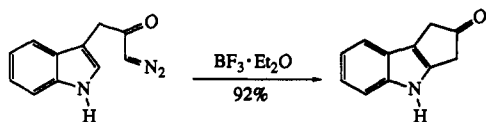
substituents. Illustrative examples from Mander's work, in which trifluoroacetic acid was used as catalyst, are shown in Scheme 384.⁷²⁹⁻⁷³¹ Maity and Mukerjee⁷³² have used this approach to synthesize tetracyclic dienones (**572** and **573**) related to diterpenes, e.g. the transformation shown in Schemes 385 and 386, as did Nicolaou and Zipkin⁷³³ in their synthesis of the ring system (**574**) of aphidicolin and related natural products (Scheme 387).

Several types of heterocycles are also accessible by acid-catalyzed cyclization of α -diazocarbonyl precursors. Although probably different mechanistically, these reactions provide products similar to those obtained in some rhodium(II)-catalyzed processes (see section III.D). For example, Doyle and co-workers⁴³⁵ found that the solid-phase sulfonic acid resin Nafion catalyzed the cyclization of diazoacetamides of the type shown in Scheme 388, as did rhodium(II) acetate, to form 2(3*H*)-indolinone derivatives. Similar cyclizations

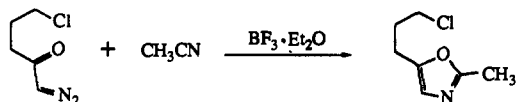
Scheme 389



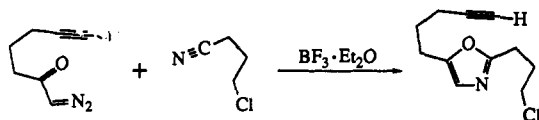
Scheme 390



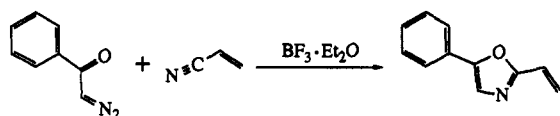
Scheme 391



Scheme 392



Scheme 393



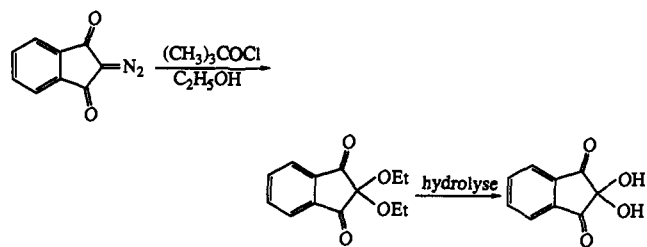
of diazocarbonyls of type **575** catalyzed by trifluoroacetic acid, resulted in two heterocycles (**576** and **577**) (Scheme 389). The reaction course in this case depends on the reaction conditions employed.⁷³⁴ Furthermore, Pellicciari and co-workers⁷³⁵ used boron trifluoride etherate to bring about the formation, in 92% yield, of the tricyclic indolone derivative in Scheme 390.

Intermolecular acid-catalyzed reactions of α -diazocarbonyls with π -electron systems are less common than intramolecular processes. Reaction with nitriles, catalyzed by boron trifluoride etherate or aluminum chloride, offers a direct route to substituted oxazoles.⁷³⁶⁻⁷⁴⁰ Several examples are shown in Schemes 391-393. The process is reasonably explained by a stepwise mechanism in which a Lewis acid-diazonium ion complex is attacked by the nitrogen atom of the nitrile followed by intramolecular attack by the oxygen atom to complete the heterocyclic ring.

K. Oxidations of Diazocarbonyl Compounds

Several reagents are available for oxidation of the diazo function of α -diazocarbonyl compounds, the nature of the product depending on the choice of oxidant and the substitution pattern of the substrate. Peroxy acids react with disubstituted diazo ketones to form α -diketones which may react further with this oxidant.^{741,742} *tert*-Butyl hypochlorite in ethanol oxidizes 2-diazoindanedione to a trione monoketal which on hydrolysis furnishes ninhydrin hydrate (Scheme 394). Oxidation of primary diazo ketones with ozone can lead

Scheme 394



Scheme 395

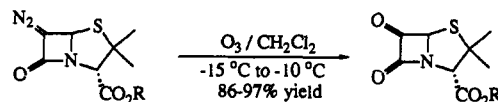


Table 11. Oxidation of Diazocarbonyls by DMD

Diazocarbonyls	Products

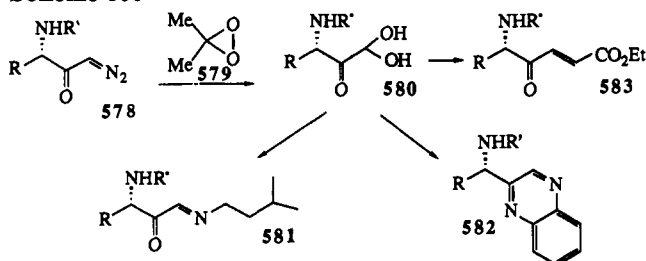
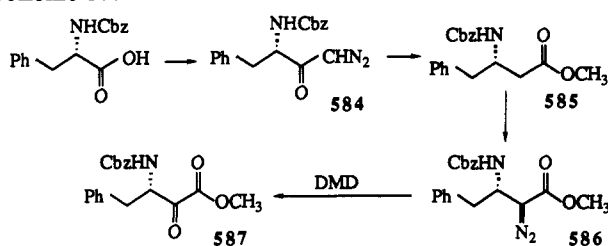
to products resulting from C-H bond cleavage of the initially formed glyoxal.⁷⁴³ However, when this complication is absent, as with 6-diazo-APA (Scheme 395), cleavage by ozone to the α -diketone can be very efficient.⁷⁴⁴

Perhaps the most synthetically useful diazocarbonyl oxidation is through the use of dioxiranes, notably dimethyldioxirane (DMD) **579**. This oxidant, which can be readily prepared and distilled as a dilute solution in acetone,^{745,746} converts diazo ketones into diketones or glyoxals in essentially quantitative yield.⁷⁴⁷ Products are obtained in a high state of purity since there are no byproducts other than nitrogen and acetone; glyoxals are usually isolated in hydrated form. Some examples are shown in Table 11. Particularly noteworthy are the diazo ketones with oxidizable heterocyclic substituents where reaction occurs exclusively at the diazo group. This process has been used recently to produce homochiral *N*-protected amino acids and dipeptides (Table 12).⁷⁴⁸ By combining the oxidation process with a Wittig olefination routine, it is possible to bring about one-pot conversions of chiral diazo ketones **578** into optically pure enones of the type **583** shown in Scheme 396. Alternatively, the glyoxals **580** can be combined with isoamylamine or 1,2-aminobenzene to furnish optically pure imine **581** or quinoxaline **582**, respectively (Scheme 396).⁷⁴⁸

A final application of DMD oxidation of diazocarbonyl is illustrated in Scheme 397 for the synthesis of optically pure *N*-protected β -amino- α -keto esters from natural amino acids or dipeptides.⁷⁴⁹ Previous syntheses of these compounds proceeded with extensive racemization. In the first step in Scheme 397 an amino

Table 12. Oxidation of N-Protected Amino Acid-Derived Diazo Ketones by DMD

Diazoketones	Products

Scheme 396**Scheme 397**

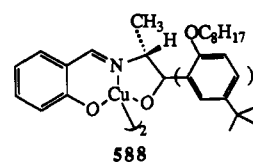
acid-derived diazo ketone, e.g. diazo ketone 584, is subjected to Wolff rearrangement using silver benzoate in methanol. The resulting β -amino ester 585 is then transformed via the Danheiser procedure²³ into a diazo ester 586. Finally DMD oxidation converts the diazo ester 586 into the α -keto ester 587, none of the stages showing any degree of racemization.

L. Asymmetric Synthesis in Diazocarbonyl Reactions

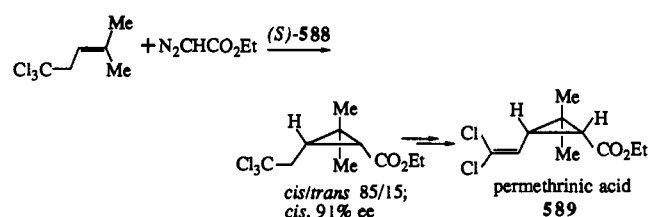
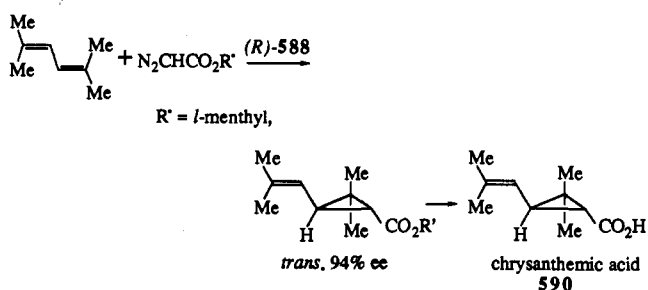
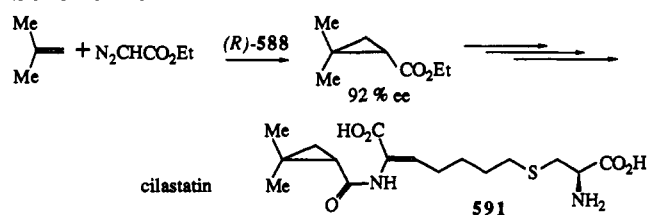
The possibilities for asymmetric synthesis employing diazocarbonyl compounds are numerous, and although this aspect of their use as reaction intermediates is a relatively recent pursuit, very substantial progress has been made especially in enantioselective cyclopropanation. Although the option of covalently attaching chiral auxiliaries to diazocarbonyl precursors or to substrates, e.g. alkenes for cyclopropanation, has been examined in several C–C bond forming reactions, the fact that many of the processes require metal catalysis makes the alternative option of using chiral catalysts particularly attractive and potentially more rewarding for commercial exploitation. The double option of combining the use of a chiral catalyst with a substrate carrying a chiral auxiliary is also available.

Essentially all of the early studies were directed toward enantioselective cyclopropanation and Maas has

thoroughly reviewed the literature up to 1985.^{1b} The most successful of these early studies were those of Aratani^{715–763} who developed a series of chiral copper(II) chelates of type 588 from salicylaldehyde and

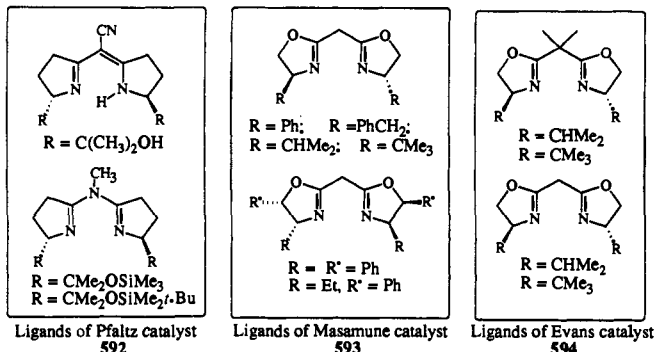


optically active amino alcohols with which to catalyze intermolecular cyclopropanation of alkenes and dienes with diazo esters. Enantioselectivities exceeding 90% ee could be achieved in selected cases (Schemes 398–400) including the synthesis of permethrinic acid (589),

Scheme 398**Scheme 399****Scheme 400**

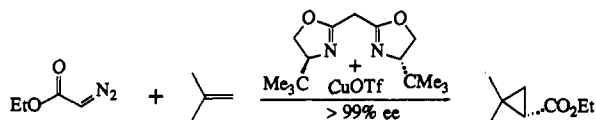
trans-chrysanthemic acid (590), and the 2,2-dimethylcyclopropane carboxylate of cilastatin 591. The commercialization of the Aratani route to cilastatin represents a notable achievement for the asymmetric catalysis methodology involving diazocarbonyls.

There are now several catalysts available which are capable of achieving high levels (>90%) of enantioselectivity in cyclopropanation over a range of alkenes. The most successful of these are those with chiral ligands 592, 593, and 594. The catalysts of Pfaltz 592,^{764–769} Masamune 593,^{760,761} and Evans 594^{762,763} are all based on copper(II) or copper(I) with C_2 -symmetric semi-corrin or bisoxazoline auxiliaries, whereas Doyle's catalysts 595^{1b,244,299,764–768} are rhodium(II) complexes bearing chiral carboxamide ligands. The active form of the former catalysts is copper(I); reduction of copper(II) prior to use is therefore necessary. Enantioselectivities greater than 90% have been realized

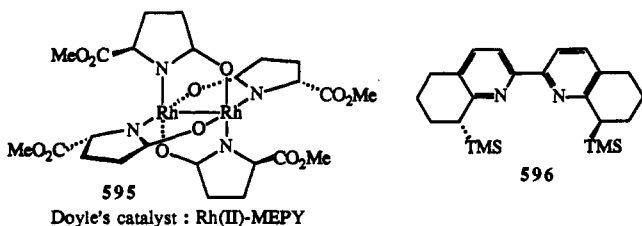


with monosubstituted alkenes and dienes using the Pfaltz catalyst 592, but di- and trisubstituted alkenes exhibited selectivities and yields inferior to those produced with the Aratani catalyst (588). Similar levels of enantiocontrol were obtained with the chiral bis-oxazolone catalysts, a notable illustration being the >99% ee for the cyclopropanation of isobutene with ethyl diazoacetate (Scheme 401). Very recently, Ito

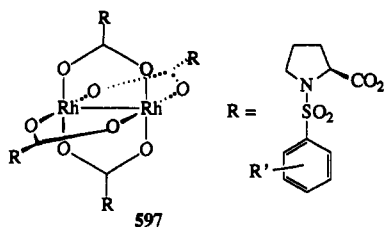
Scheme 401



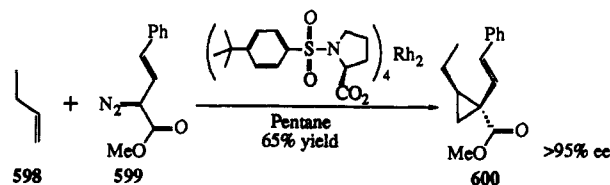
and Katsuki⁷⁶⁹ have reported that the copper-based chiral bipyridine 596 as a catalyst gives high levels of



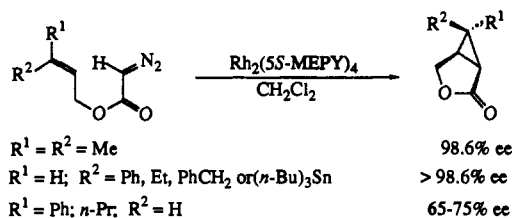
asymmetric induction in the cyclopropanation of styrene (66–99% ee), but the enantiomeric pure ligand suffers from the disadvantage of being accessible from the racemate only by HPLC. However, there is one report, due to Matlin,⁷⁷⁰ of the use of a copper(II) chelate possessing rigid (+)-(trifluoroacetyl)camphor ligands for the cyclopropanation of styrene with 2-diazodimmedone. Although an optical yield of 100% was reported, there have been no other reports that would have allowed further assessment of this catalyst. Doyle's Rh(II)-MEPY systems are also very effective catalytically for cyclopropanation of monosubstituted alkenes with (+)- or (-)-menthyl diazoacetate or ethyl diazoacetate, although the levels of stereocontrol have not yet reached those produced with the chiral copper systems.⁷⁶⁴ McKerverve and co-workers^{41,771} have developed prolinates derivatives of rhodium(II) 597 as



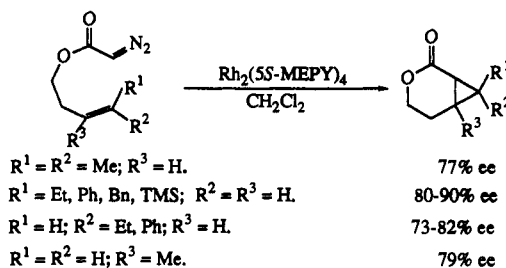
Scheme 402



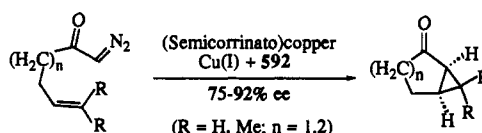
Scheme 403



Scheme 404



Scheme 405

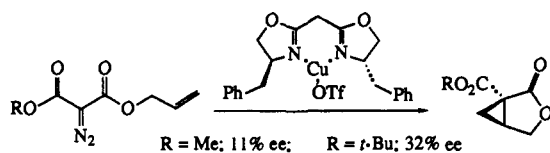


homochiral catalyst for the intramolecular carbenoid transformation (*vide infra*). Davies⁷⁷² has applied this type of catalyst to the reactions of vinyldiazocarbonyl 599 with monosubstituted alkene 598 to give (*E*)-vinylcyclopropane adduct 600 with high enantioselectivity (Scheme 402).

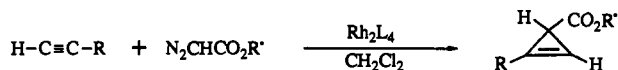
There have been equally important developments in intramolecular cyclopropanation, an area where Doyle's catalysts (595) show outstanding capabilities for enantiocontrol in the cyclization of allyl and homoallyl diazo esters to bicyclic γ- and δ-lactones, respectively (Schemes 403 and 404).^{765,773} The data also reveal that intramolecular cyclopropanation of (*Z*)-alkenes is generally more enantioselective than that of (*E*)-alkenes in bicyclic γ-lactone formation.⁷⁶⁵ Both Rh(II)-MEPY enantiomers are available, and through their use enantiomeric products are accessible. In preparative-scale reactions, less than 0.25 mol % of catalyst is adequate for high yields of pure products with >95% ee values. In a few selected cases, the Pfaltz catalyst results in high-level enantioselectivity in intramolecular cyclopropanation (Scheme 405).⁷⁶⁹ On the other hand, the Aratani catalyst is less effective than the Doyle catalyst or Pfaltz catalyst (592) in asymmetric intramolecular cyclopropanations.⁷⁷⁴ In addition, the bisoxazoline-derived copper catalyst shows lower enantioselectivity in the intramolecular cyclopropanation of allyl diazomalonnate (Scheme 406).⁷⁷⁵

Asymmetric cyclopropanation is a related area where chiral catalysts are beginning to show promise. In the

Scheme 406

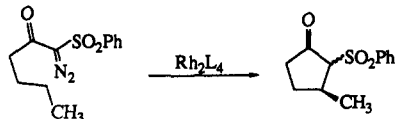


Scheme 407



R = CH₃OCH₂; R' = (+)-menthyl; L = 5*R*-MEPY; Yield = 43%; de = 98%
 R = CH₃OCH₂; R' = (-)-menthyl; L = 5*S*-MEPY; ——— de = 98%
 R = AcOCH₂; R' = (-)-menthyl; L = 5*S*-MEPY; Yield = 30%; de = 98%
 R = CH₃OCH₂; R' = ethyl; L = 5*R*-MEPY; Yield = 73%; ee = 69%
 R = (CH₃)₃C; R' = ethyl; L = 5*R*-MEPY; Yield = 85%; ee = 57%

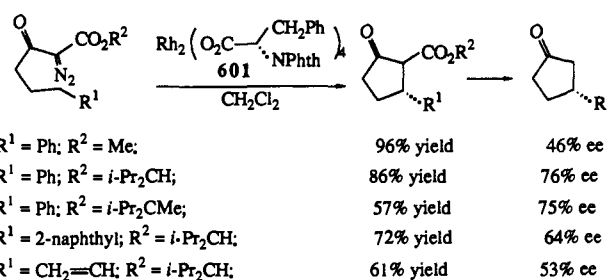
Scheme 408



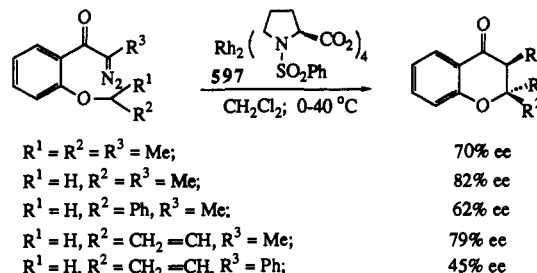
intermolecular mode, 1-alkynes react with (+)- or (-)-menthyl diazoacetate or ethyl diazoacetate (Scheme 407) in the presence of Rh₂(5*S*-MEPY)₄ or Rh₂(5*R*-MEPY)₄ to furnish cyclopropanes with moderate to high diastereoselectivity and/or enantioselectivity.⁷⁶⁶ Propargyl methyl ether or propargyl acetate, for example, reacts with (-)-menthyl diazoacetate in the presence of Rh₂(5*S*-MEPY)₄ to produce the corresponding cyclopropanes in 98% de. These cyclopropanations are subjected to significant double diastereoselection with (+)- and (-)-menthyl diazoacetate.

There are four other processes presumed to involve carbenoids which have been screened for catalyzed asymmetric synthesis: viz. C–H insertion, ylide formation coupled with sigmatropic rearrangement, aromatic cycloaddition, and dipolar cycloaddition. Unfortunately, the copper-based complexes which are so successful in catalytic asymmetric cyclopropanation have limited chemical reactivity and are more or less inert in these other carbenoid reactions. However, the Rh(II)-MEPY catalysts are effective in intramolecular C–H insertion. On the other hand, as we have emphasized in earlier sections, rhodium(II) carboxylates are catalytically active across the entire spectrum of carbenoid reactions including C–H insertion. Furthermore, rhodium(II) carboxylates are efficient for decomposition of diazo dicarbonyl compounds such as diazoacetoacetic ester and diazomalonnate where the rhodium carboxamides usually fail. The question naturally arose therefore as to the efficacy of chiral rhodium(II) carboxylates for catalyzed asymmetric synthesis. The first reports of enantioselective C–H insertion reactions employed chiral rhodium(II) carboxylates derived from (*S*)-mandelic acid, *N*-(phenylsulfonyl)-*L*-proline and *N*-acetyl-*L*-phenylalanine.⁷⁷¹ Although very efficient cyclization leading to substituted cyclopentanones did occur, see for example Scheme 408, the enantiomeric excesses of the products were low (12% ee). Several other amino acid-based chiral Rh(II) catalysts are also now available.^{776,777} Catalytic decomposition of α -diazo- β -keto ester in the presence of dirhodium(II) tetrakis[*N*-phthaloyl-(*S*-

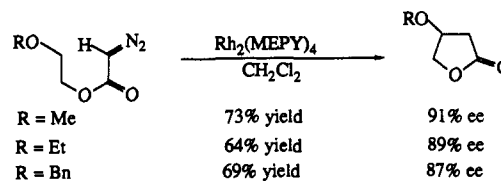
Scheme 409



Scheme 410



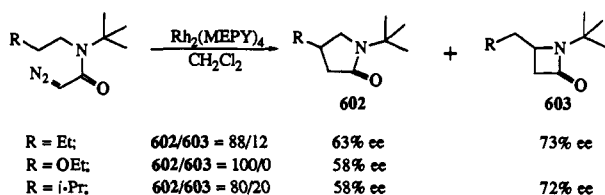
Scheme 411



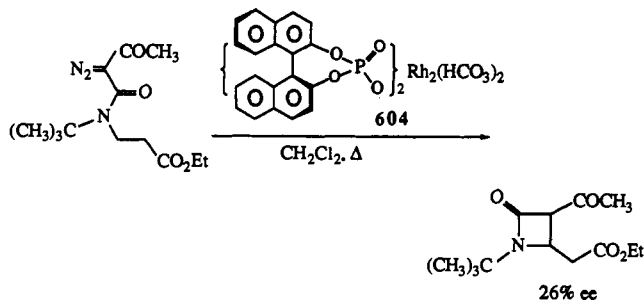
phenylalaninate] (601) to give cyclopentanones with moderate to high enantioselectivity (Scheme 409).⁷⁷⁶ Here the nature of the alkoxy substituent of the ester group strongly influenced the enantioselectivity. More recent work has shown that C–H insertion reactions can, in suitably formulated precursors, be used to construct six-membered oxygen heterocycles and that high levels of enantioselectivity can be obtained using the rhodium(II) *L*-prolinate catalyst 597. For example, treatment of the precursors shown in Scheme 410 with this catalyst (1–2% by mass) in dichloromethane led to the formation of substituted chromanones (90–100% yield) with enantiomeric excess values in the range 45–82%.⁴¹ Doyle's Rh(II)-MEPY catalyst was also catalytically active in this C–H insertion series, but its ability to promote enantioselective was inferior to the prolinate catalyst.

There is, however, a group of intramolecular C–H insertions leading to γ -lactones where the Rh₂(MEPY)₄ catalysts (595) show great promise. This is evident from the results with a series of 2-alkoxyethyl diazoacetates (Scheme 411) where enantiomeric excesses are at the 90% level.²⁹⁹ Rather similar C–H insertions, also catalyzed by Rh(II)-MEPY, occur with diazoacetamides of the type shown in Scheme 412,⁷⁶⁷ although the γ -lactams 582 produced have enantioselectivities inferior to those obtained in the γ -lactone series (Scheme 411). In these cyclizations β -lactam (603) formation (Scheme 412), competes with γ -lactam formation because of the activating influence of the amide nitrogen atom on the adjacent C–H bond.^{778,779} Although the β -lactams show significant levels of enantiocontrol, they are very much minor products of the cyclization process. Much higher conversions to *trans*- β -lactams (catalyzed

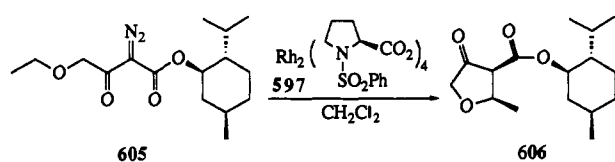
Scheme 412



Scheme 413



Scheme 414

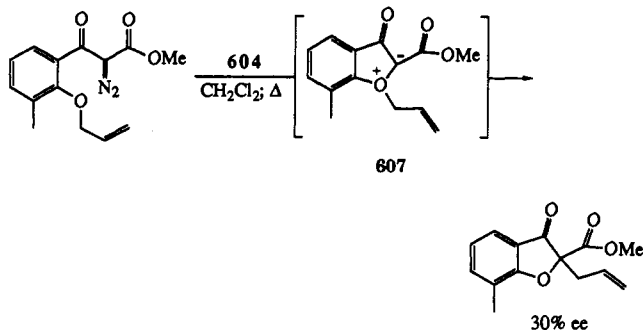


by achiral rhodium(II) carboxylates) are possible with certain diazo dicarbonyls of the type shown in Scheme 413. Very recently a new type of chiral rhodium(II) catalyst, Rh(II)-phos 604, derived from (+)-binaphthyl phosphoric acid, has been introduced, showing a broad spectrum of reactivity in diazocarbonyl reactions. When applied to the β -lactam synthesis in Scheme 413, the Rh(II)-phos catalyst produced an ee value of 26%.⁷⁸⁰ Combinations of chiral substrates and chiral catalysts have also been studied in C-H insertion reactions. In a recent example, the α -diazo- β -keto ester 605 in Scheme 414 was cyclized in the presence of rhodium(II) L-prolinate to afford the furanone 606 with 61% diastereoselectivity. This cyclization could also be brought about with rhodium(II) acetate, but the achiral catalyst produced a much lower diastereoselectivity (18%).⁷⁸¹

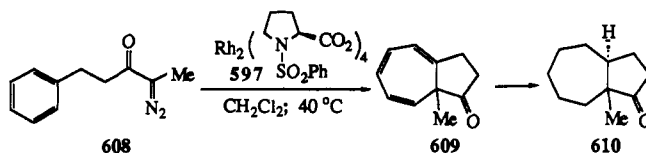
The Rh(II)-phos catalyst 604 is beginning to show promise in some other areas, notably asymmetric sigmatropic rearrangement of oxonium ylides. The question of the extent of metal involvement in catalyzed diazocarbonyl reactions terminating in [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement has been raised by several workers. One view is that after forming the carbenoid the metal departs the scene mechanistically and takes no further part in the subsequent stages. However, it has been observed that when the Rh(II)-phos catalyst (604) was used to bring about the cyclization reaction shown in Scheme 415 the product (of [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement) had an ee value of 30%.⁷⁸⁰ Although modest, this stereocontrol suggests that the metal, and its ligands, exert some influence on formation of the oxonium ylide 607, presumed to precede the sigmatropic rearrangement step.

Catalytic asymmetric synthesis involving the two diazo ketone precursors 608 and 611 in Schemes 416 and 417 has also been observed in intramolecular aromatic cycloaddition. With the simple benzene

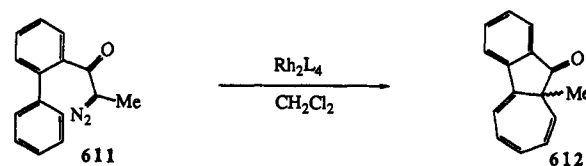
Scheme 415

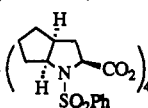


Scheme 416



Scheme 417



Cata.: Rh ₂ (5S-MEPY) ₄ ;	Reaction temp.: 0 °C	2% ee
Cata.: Rh ₂ [(+)-mandelate] ₄ ;	Reaction temp.: 0 °C	8% ee
Cata.: Rh ₂ (L-Proline) ₄ (597);	Reaction temp.: -30 °C	79% ee
Cata.: Rh ₂ [(+)-Phos] ₄ ;	Reaction temp.: -30 °C	60% ee
Cata.: Rh ₂ () ₄	Reaction temp.: -30 °C	71% ee

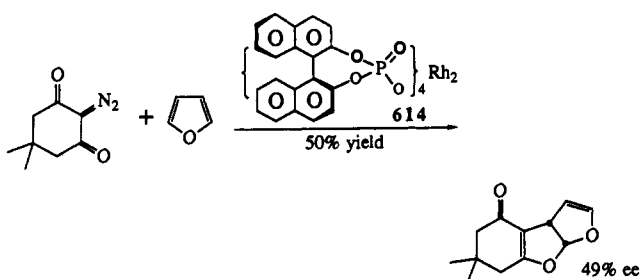
613

derivative 608 a 33% ee was realized employing rhodium(II) L-prolinate (597). Hydrogenation of the product 609 over palladium furnished (+)-*trans*-1-methylbicyclo[5.3.0]decan-3-one (610, 33% ee) in 93% yield, thus completing a short partial asymmetric synthesis of this bicyclic ketone from a readily accessible precursor.⁷⁷¹ In the biphenyl series 611, excellent conversions to tricyclic ketone 612 were observed with a range of chiral rhodium(II) catalysts. The stereocontrol in the latter reaction was very catalyst dependent (Scheme 417). Rh(II)-MEPY resulted in an ee value of only 2% and rhodium(II) mandelate was equally poor. Much better ee values were obtained with Rh(II)-phos (604) and with a new rhodium(II) carboxylate 613 derived from the (+)-enantiomer of a bicyclic amino acid. The highest value, however, of 79% ee was achieved employing the rhodium(II) L-prolinate catalyst (597) at -30 °C.^{145,220}

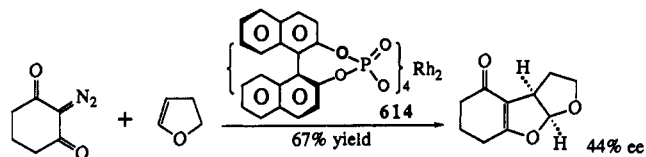
Chiral rhodium(II) catalysts also show promise in the dipolar cycloaddition of diazocarbonyls to heterocycles. Pirrung and Zhang⁷⁸¹ have demonstrated that chiral dirhodium tetrakisbinaphthol phosphate 614 promotes dipolar cycloaddition to furan and 2,3-dihydrofuran with good asymmetric induction (Schemes 418 and 419).

Although we have emphasized the chiral catalyst approach to asymmetric synthesis in this brief summary, it would be misleading to leave the impression that

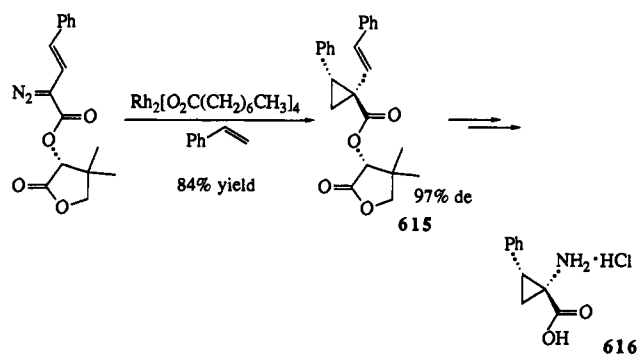
Scheme 418



Scheme 419



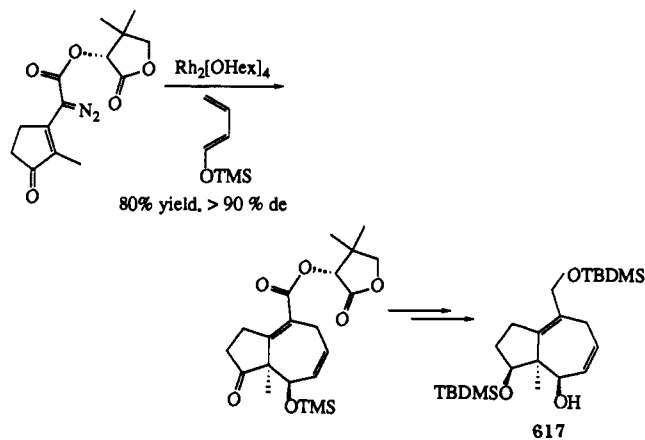
Scheme 420



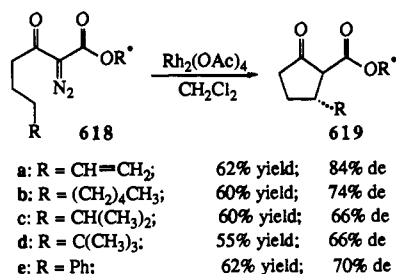
other approaches have not been pursued. In fact, there have been several investigations of systems in which an achiral catalyst was used to bring about reaction of a substrate containing a covalently bound chiral auxiliary. In general, however, applications to cyclopropanation have not been very successful. Only very low enantiomeric excesses were obtained when styrene, for example, was cyclopropanated with diazo esters derived from (+)- or (-)-borneol or (-)-menthol.⁷⁸² Optical induction in cyclopropanation of styrene with a chiral diazoacetamide was similarly small.²⁴ However, there is one exception, in which the (*R*)-(-)-pantolactone was a chiral auxiliary, where a diastereomeric excess for intermolecular cyclopropanation of 97% was recorded^{783,784} (Scheme 420). The cyclopropane adduct **615** was further converted to the cyclopropane amino acid **616** by oxidative cleavage of the vinyl group followed by a Curtius rearrangement. By combining the asymmetric cyclopropanation with a subsequent Cope rearrangement, enantioselective synthesis of hydroazulene **617** has been achieved by Davies and co-workers (Scheme 421).⁷⁶⁴

Taber and Raman²⁸⁹ have conducted a very successful investigation of enantioselective intramolecular C-H insertion reactions leading to optically active disubstituted cyclopentanones. The precursors were β -keto diazo esters of the type **618** show in Scheme 422 in which a chiral auxiliary (**620**) based on (+)- or (-)-camphor was incorporated into the alkoxy moiety of the ester. Cyclization was brought about by rhodium(II) acetate with the results shown in Scheme 422. Diastereoselectivity was good in all cases, the highest

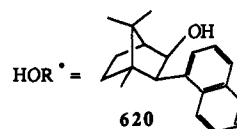
Scheme 421



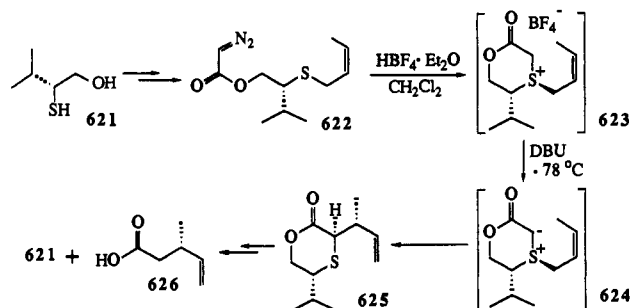
Scheme 422



a: R = CH=CH ₂ ;	62% yield;	84% de
b: R = (CH ₂) ₄ CH ₃ ;	60% yield;	74% de
c: R = CH(CH ₃) ₂ ;	60% yield;	66% de
d: R = C(CH ₃) ₃ ;	55% yield;	66% de
e: R = Ph;	62% yield;	70% de



Scheme 423



value being found with the vinyl precursor **618a**, the product of which was later transformed into (+)-estrone methyl ether in 91% ee.⁷⁸⁵ The diastereoisomers were separable by chromatography, and substituted cyclopentanones of high optical purity were thus accessible.

Asymmetric induction via ylide formation and tandem [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement should be possible through the use of chiral auxiliaries incorporated into diazocarbonyl precursors. Kurth and co-workers⁷⁸⁶ have reported the utilization of a thioxanone-based [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement strategy to construct chiral 3-methylpent-4-enoic acid **626**. Thus, diazocarbonyl **622** derived from the chiral auxiliary **621** was treated with a Lewis acid to give the corresponding thioxonium salt **623** which was then transformed to ylide **624** by treatment of base. The ylide underwent the [2,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement to give **625** in 66% yield with 88% de. The thioxone **625** was finally disassembled to give the chiral 3-methyl-4-pentenoic acid **626** (Scheme 423).

IV. Conclusion

It is now more than a century since Buchner began his systematic study of organic synthesis using α -diazocarbonyls as intermediates. It is clear from the variety of studies in the more than 700 publications that we have surveyed here that modern organic synthesis continues to benefit from the outstanding versatility of this class of compounds. The rapid recent development of diazocarbonyl chemistry is due in no small measure to the pioneering research of Teysié, Hubert, and Noels⁸⁵⁻⁹³ that led to the discovery of the rhodium carboxylate catalysts.

V. References and Footnotes

- (1) (a) α -Diazocarbonyl compounds are but one of a group of compounds within the vast array of diazoorganic molecules. Diazoorganophosphorus and diazoorganosulfur compounds have been investigated extensively but their applications in synthesis are, as yet, not very well developed. For comprehensive accounts of these and other aspects of diazoorganic compounds including diazoalkanes, see: Weygand, F.; Bestmann, H. J. *New Methods of Prep. Org. Chem.* 1964, 3, 451. Kirmse, W. *Carbene Chemistry*, 2nd ed.; Academic Press: New York, 1971. Jones, M.; Moss, R. A. *Carbenes*; Wiley & Sons: New York, 1973; Vol. 1. Regitz, M. *Diazoalkanes*; Thieme Verlag: Stuttgart, 1977. Patai, S. *The Chemistry of Diazonium and Diazo Groups*; John Wiley & Sons: New York, 1978; Vols. 1 and 2. Wulfman, D. S.; Poling, B. In *Reactive Intermediates*; Abramovitch, R. A., Ed.; Plenum Press: New York, 1980; Chapter 5, p 321. Regitz, M.; Maas, G. *Aliphatic Diazo Compound-Properties and Synthesis*; Academic Press: New York, 1986. (b) For recent reviews of diazocarbonyl chemistry which concentrate on metal-catalyzed carbenoid processes, see: Doyle, M. P. *Chem. Rev.* 1986, 86, 919. Maas, G. *Top. Curr. Chem.* 1987, 137, 75. Demonceau, A.; Noels, A. F.; Hubert, A. J. In *Aspects of Homogeneous Catalysis*; Ugo, R., Ed.; Reidel, D. Publishing Company: Lancaster, 1988; Vol. 6, p 199. Adams, J.; Spero, D. M. *Tetrahedron* 1991, 47, 1765. Taber, D. F. In *Comprehensive Organic Synthesis; Selectivity, Strategy and Efficiency in Modern Organic Chemistry*; Trost, B. M., Fleming, I., Eds.; Pergamon: Oxford, 1991; Vol. 3, Chapter 4.2. Davies, H. M. L. In *Comprehensive Organic Synthesis; Selectivity, Strategy and Efficiency in Modern Organic Chemistry*; Trost, B. M., Fleming, I., Eds.; Pergamon: Oxford, 1991; Vol. 4, Chapter 4.8. Doyle, M. P. *Recl. Trav. Chim. Pays-Bas.* 1991, 110, 305. Padwa, A.; Hornbuckle, S. F. *Chem. Rev.* 1991, 91, 263. Padwa, A.; Krumpke, K. E. *Tetrahedron* 1992, 48, 5385.
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