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TWO STEP SYNTHESIS OF 3,7,7-TRIMETHYL-1,3,5-CYCLOHEPTATRIENE FROM Δ^3 -CARENE

G. Délérís^a; A. Gadrás^b; J. Dunoguès^c

^a Laboratoire de Chimie Bioorganique, Université de Bordeaux 2, Bordeaux, France ^b Rhône-Poulenc Agrochimie, Centre de Recherches de la Dargoire, Lyon, France ^c Laboratoire de Chimie Organique et Organométallique CNRS URA 35, Talence, France

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Communication

TWO STEP SYNTHESIS OF 3,7,7-TRIMETHYL-1,3,5-CYCLOHEPTATRIENE FROM Δ^3 -CARENE

G. DÉLÉRIS

*Laboratoire de Chimie Bioorganique, Université de Bordeaux 2,
F-33076 Bordeaux, France*

and

A. GADRAS

*Rhône-Poulenc Agrochimie, Centre de Recherches de la Dargoire,
F-69009 Lyon, France*

and

J. DUNOGUÈS

*Laboratoire de Chimie Organique et Organométallique CNRS URA 35,
Université de Bordeaux 1, F-33405 Talence, France*

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3,7,7-trimethyl-1,3,5-cycloheptatriene was obtained in 74% overall yield when adducts from ene reaction between Δ^3 -carene and N-sulphinyl arenesulphonamides are reacted with hexamethyl disilazane at 80°C.

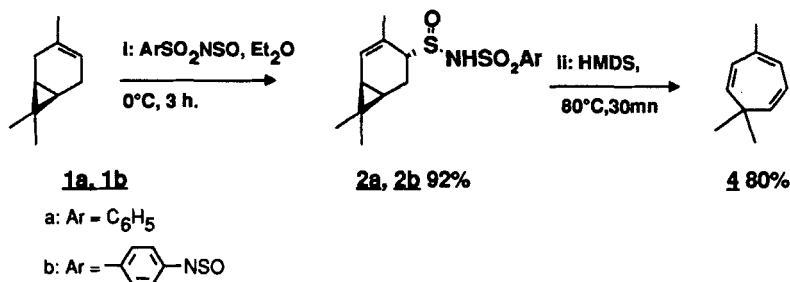
Key words: Ene reaction, N-sulphinyl arenesulphonamides, hexamethyl disilazane, Δ^3 carene.

We previously pointed out that pericyclic reactions involving readily available N-sulphinyl arenesulphonamides were a convenient way to introduce at allylic positions various functions such as thiols¹ or silyl groups^{2,3} from which ketones, nitriles, etc., could be obtained. This scheme enabled us to alkylate or isomerize terpenes⁴ or to synthesize alkylation derivatives.^{5,6}

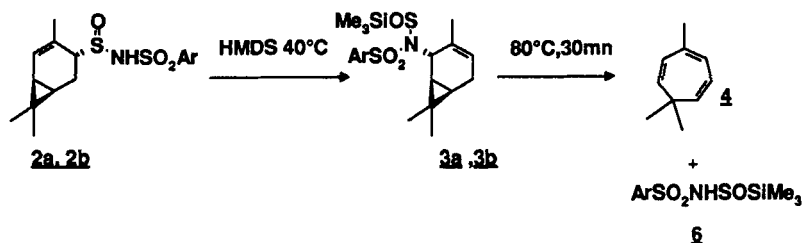
Recently, we have shown^{7,8} that ene adducts **2** react with hexamethyldisilazane (HMDS) to yield allylic amines, protected as sulphonamides. These reactions, when carried out with Δ^3 carene, required a careful control of the reaction temperature conditions, i.e. 40°C in this case.

Here we report that ene reaction of Δ^3 -carene with N-sulphinyl sulphonamides followed by treatment with HMDS at 80°C for 30 minutes promptly yielded 3,7,7-trimethyl-1,3,5-cycloheptatriene⁹ **4** (Scheme I).

Compound **4** is a natural product isolated from *Pinus sylvestris*.¹⁰ This hydrocarbon has been extensively studied for its spectroscopic¹¹ and chemical¹² properties relevant to the cycloheptatriene to norcaradiene conversion. Its first syntheses have



SCHEME I

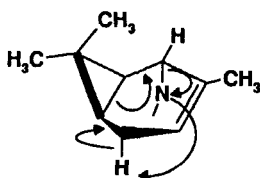


SCHEME II

been described by Corey¹³ and by Campbell.¹⁴ They required acidic isomerization of carvone and subsequent reduction to eucarvol which was then dehydrated (H⁺, 120°C, 20 min) to provide **4** (26% overall yield).

In order to examine whether this reaction follows the same pathway as our previous amination reaction, we reacted **2a** or **2b** with HMDS at 40°C, and **3a** or **3b** (from which allylic sulphonamides can be obtained after hydrolysis^{7,8}) were obtained as previously described. However when **3a** or **3b** were heated at 80°C for 30 min, they afforded **4** (74% yield from **1**) along with **6** (Scheme II).

The driving force for this apparently facile rearrangement might well be the release of steric compression due to the disappearance of 1,4-cis proton-nitrogen pseudo diaxial interaction in the "inverted boat" conformation of **3**.



This new ring-enlargement appears to be competitive for the synthesis of 3,7,7-trimethyl-1,3,5-cycloheptatriene from Δ³-carene, the major component of Indian pine tree (*Pinus longifolia*) turpentine. Work dealing with the application of this reaction to the synthesis of more sophisticated natural compounds is in progress.

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9. In a typical experiment, **2a** or **2b** (40 mmol, prepared as reported in References 7 and 8) was dissolved in 1,2-dichloroethane (30 ml) in the presence of HMDS (25 ml) and heated at 80°C for 30 mm. The reaction mixture was then concentrated under reduced pressure (10 Torr) until only a brown solid remained. The liquid phase was then trapped with acetone/dry ice and distilled to yield **4** (4.3 g, 32 mol, 80% yield). Bp/27 torr = 67°C. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, TMS ref, BRUKER WM 360) spectrum in full accordance with the one described in Reference 2; ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, TMS ref, BRUKER WH 90) δ ppm: 127.1 C₁ or C₆; 127.3 C₁ or C₆; 132 C₂ or C₅; 133.4 C₂ or C₅; 124, C₃; 138.1 C₄; 26.15 C₇ or C₈; 34.7, C₉; 24.3, C₁₀. Mass spectrometry (EI): m/z 134 (14.8) M⁺, 119 (100) M—CH₃, 91 (32.2) tropylium, 77 C₆H₆⁺.
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