



Felkin–Anh selectivity in Rh(bisoxazolinyphenyl)-catalyzed reductive aldol coupling reaction: asymmetric synthesis of stereotriads

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ABSTRACT

The catalytic reductive aldol coupling of 2-phenylpropionaldehyde and acrylate derivatives with rhodium-bisoxazoliny catalysts resulted in high Felkin–Anh selectivity (β,γ -*syn*) up to 98% accompanied by α,β -*anti* diastereoselectivity and high enantiomeric excesses up to 99%.

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1. Introduction

The asymmetric reductive aldol coupling reaction initiated by hydride promoters has been recognized as a potent and versatile method for construction of α,β -stereogenic centers with α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compounds such as enones or acrylates as enolate precursors and aldehydes or imines as acceptors.¹ For example, Morken reported high α,β -*syn* selectivity of up to 90% in the coupling of methyl acrylate and α -benzyloxyacetaldehyde with iridium-bisoxazoliny pyridine catalyst and Et₂MeSiH.² On the other hand, we observed high α,β -*anti* selectivity of up to 98% in the coupling of *tert*-butyl acrylate and benzaldehyde with rhodium-bisoxazoliny phenyl catalyst and (EtO)₂MeSiH.³ These reactions have complementary stereoselectivity. Furthermore, Morken extended the reaction to double stereodifferentiation with (*R*)- α -benzyloxypropionaldehyde to observe α,β -*syn*-Felkin–Anh selectivity (i.e., β,γ -*syn*) (Scheme 1). Interestingly, no coupling was observed by use of the corresponding (*S*)-aldehyde, which is thought to be a mismatched acceptor under catalyst control. Recently, Kricheldorf reported high *anti*-Felkin–Anh selectivity (α,β -*syn*, β,γ -*anti*) up to 95% in the hydrogen-mediated coupling of methyl vinyl ketone and α -aminoaldehydes with rhodium catalyst.⁴

Asymmetric construction of α,β,γ -stereotriads is an important and challenging subject for organic synthesis, especially for total

synthesis of macrolides or other large naturally occurring compounds.⁵

We report here study on asymmetric synthesis of stereotriads and β,γ -stereoselectivity, Felkin–Anh or *anti*-Felkin–Anh, as summarized in Scheme 2.

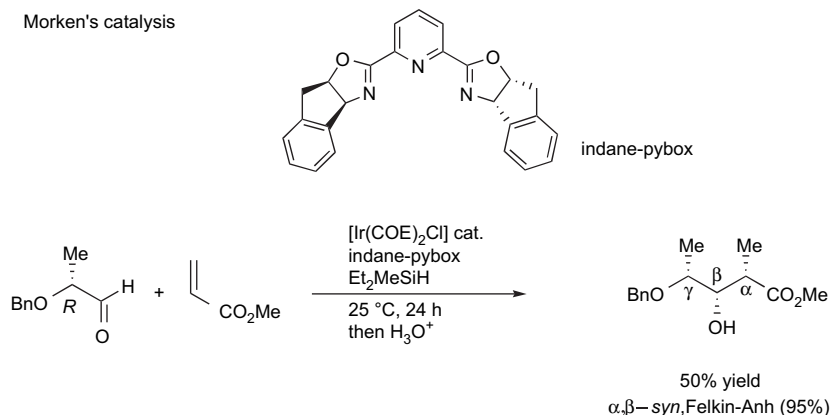
2. Results and discussion

The reductive coupling reaction of racemic 2-phenylpropanal (**5**) (1.0 mmol) and *tert*-butyl acrylate (**6**) (2.0 equiv) with achiral catalyst **1a** (1 mol %) in the presence of (EtO)₂MeSiH (2.2 equiv) was carried out at 50 °C for 30 min in a toluene solution (Table 1). The reaction mixture was treated with KF (5 equiv) and TBAF to give the desired β -hydroxyester **7** in 84% yield with 69% α,β -*anti*,*syn* selectivity, i.e., selective formation of the Felkin–Anh product. The product of the second-highest diastereomer ratio (dr), 21%, was presumed to be α,β -*anti*,*anti*-Felkin–Anh product on the basis of catalyst control. The use of an optically active aldehyde (*S*)-**5** (92% ee) resulted in formation of the corresponding coupling product (2*R*,3*R*,4*S*)-**7** in 68% dr with 93% ee. Use of other silanes, such as Me₂PhSiH and MePh₂SiH, gave slightly high stereoselectivities of 74 and 79% drs with 91 and 93% ees, respectively.

We considered that Felkin–Anh selectivity (β,γ -*syn*) could be derived from differences in steric repulsion between Ph and Me groups and the 1,3-diaxial interaction between Ph/H and Me/H, via Zimmerman–Traxler type chair-like transition state of Rh–E(O)-enolate, which gives rise to α,β -*anti* diastereoselectivity (Fig. 1).^{6,7}

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Scheme 1. Example for asymmetric synthesis of stereotriads by reductive aldol coupling reactions.

Next, we examined the reaction of the chiral catalyst **1b** with racemic aldehyde **5**, which similarly provided the (2*R*,3*R*,4*S*)-*anti*-Felkin-Anh product in a diastereomer ratio with 76% ee (Table 2). Evidently, the (*S*)-aldehyde **5** was selectively captured to give (4*S*)-absolute configuration at the γ -carbon atom. When the chiral aldehyde (*S*)-**5** (92% ee) was employed, high diastereomer ratio of 88% was obtained for *anti*-Felkin-Anh product, and the enantiomeric excess was found to be 99%. It was thus clear that the (*S,S*)-catalyst and (*S*)-aldehyde could make a matched pair. Me₂PhSiH and MePh₂SiH gave almost similar yields and stereoselectivities over 80% drs and 98% ees. On the other hand, when (*R*)-aldehyde (95% ee) was employed as an acceptor, *anti*-Felkin-Anh decreased to 20% and *anti,anti*-Felkin-Anh product was the main diastereomer in 71% ee.^{8,9}

We believe that the catalyst-controlled reaction with the chiral catalyst can preferably direct *Si*-face of the generated enolate species **i** to the acceptor aldehyde rather than *Re*-face of the enolate **ii** (Fig. 2). In addition, if the (*R*)-aldehyde is captured by the intermediate rhodium enolate, the sterically unfavorable transition state **iii** forms *anti,anti*-Felkin-Anh product.

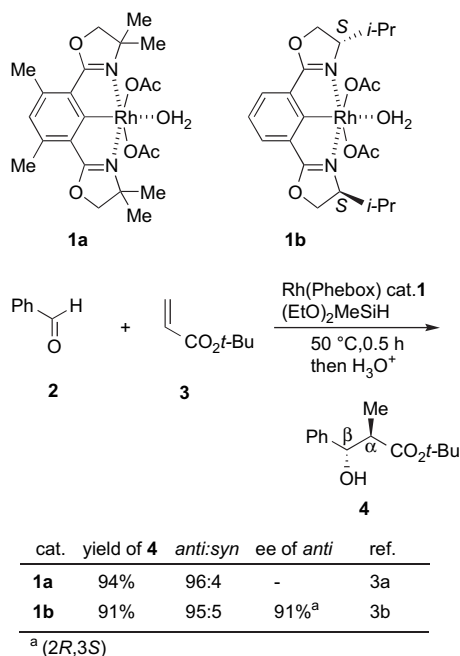
Finally, we employed three α,β -unsaturated esters, namely crotonate **8**, cinnamate **9**, and methacrylate **10**, for the coupling

with (*S*)-2-phenylpropanal in the presence of chiral catalyst **1b** (Scheme 3). The crotonate and the cinnamate provided high diastereoselectivity (>98:2, >91:9) and enantioselectivity (98%, 97%) for *anti*-Felkin-Anh products. The methacrylate **10** also resulted in high β,γ -syn selectivity with high enantioselectivity of 91%.

A single crystal of the corresponding sulfonamide-ester **14** was derived from the enantiomer of **11** (Scheme 4). From this, the absolute configuration (2*R*,3*R*,4*S*) of **11** was confirmed by X-ray analysis (Fig. 3). On the basis of the absolute configuration of **14**, we propose a hypothetical transition state giving *anti*-Felkin-Anh product with 2*R*,3*R*,4*S* (Fig. 4).

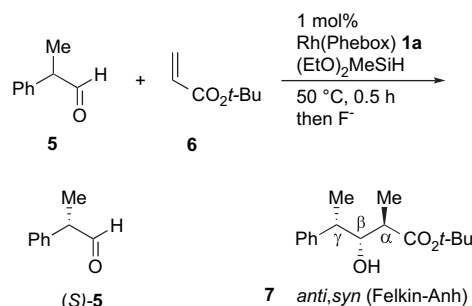
3. Conclusion

We have found Felkin-Anh selectivity in reductive aldol coupling reaction of 2-phenylpropanaldehyde as a probe acceptor with several unsaturated esters by use of achiral and chiral Rh(Phebox) catalysts. These findings will provide an important means of catalytic construction of multiple stereocenters including asymmetric synthesis with transition metal complexes.



Scheme 2. Rh(Phebox) catalyzed reductive aldol coupling of benzaldehyde and acrylate (Refs. 3a and b).

Table 1
Coupling reaction of 2-phenylpropanal and *tert*-butyl acrylate with achiral Rh(Phebox) catalyst



Aldehyde	Yield of 7 (%)	dr	ee (%) of <i>anti</i> -Felkin-Anh
5	84	69 ^a :21:7:3	Racemic
5^b	93	72 ^a :21:6:1	Racemic
5^c	94	73 ^a :19:7:1	Racemic
(<i>S</i>)- 5^d	84	68 ^a :20:10:2	93 ^e
(<i>S</i>)- 5^{d,b}	78	74 ^a :18:7:1	91 ^e
(<i>S</i>)- 5^{d,c}	73	79 ^a :15:5:1	93 ^e

^a *anti*-Felkin-Anh.

^b Me₂PhSiH.

^c MPh₂SiH.

^d 92% ee.

^e (2*R*,3*R*,4*S*).

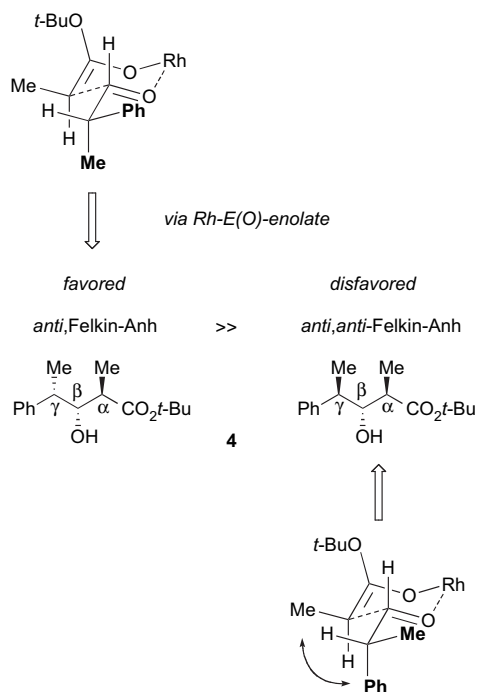


Figure 1. Hypothetical transition model for Rh(Phebox) catalyzed reductive coupling reaction.

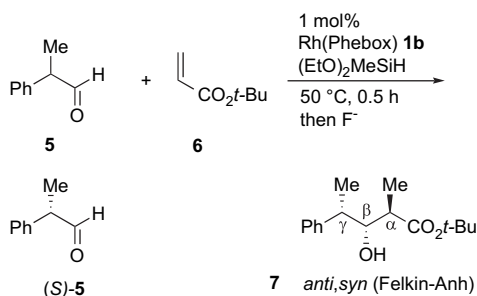
4. Experimental

4.1. General

NMR spectra were obtained in CDCl_3 solution at 25°C . ^1H NMR chemical shifts are reported in δ units, in parts per million relative to the singlet at 7.26 ppm for chloroform. IR spectra were recorded with a JASCO FT/IR-230 spectrometer. Rh(Phebox) catalysts were synthesized by the method reported previously.^{3b,10}

Table 2

Coupling reaction of 2-phenylpropanal and *tert*-butyl acrylate with chiral Rh(Phebox) catalyst



Aldehyde	Yield of 7 (%)	dr	ee (%) of <i>anti</i> -Felkin-Anh
5	70	55 ^a :35:8:2	76
(<i>S</i>)- 5 ^b	83	88 ^a :4:7:1	99 ^c
(<i>S</i>)- 5 ^{b,d}	81	80 ^a :4:15:1	98 ^c
(<i>S</i>)- 5 ^{b,e}	72	88 ^a :2:9:1	98 ^c
(<i>R</i>)- 5 ^f	75	20 ^a :65 ^g :14:1	71 ^g

^a *anti*-Felkin-Anh.

^b 92% ee.

^c (2*R*,3*R*,4*S*).

^d Me_2PhSiH .

^e MPh_2SiH .

^f 95% ee.

^g *anti,anti*-Felkin-Anh (2*R*,3*R*,4*R*).

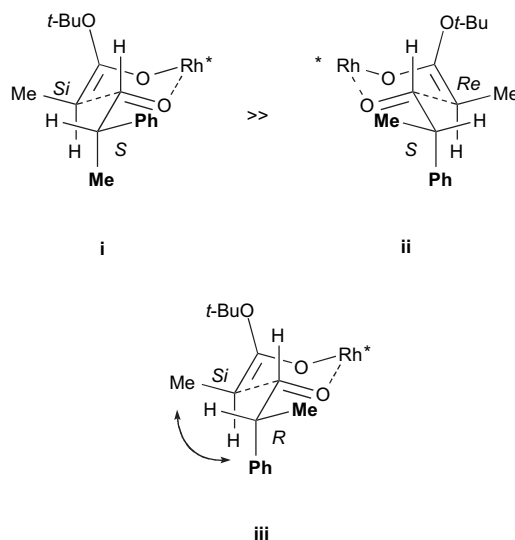
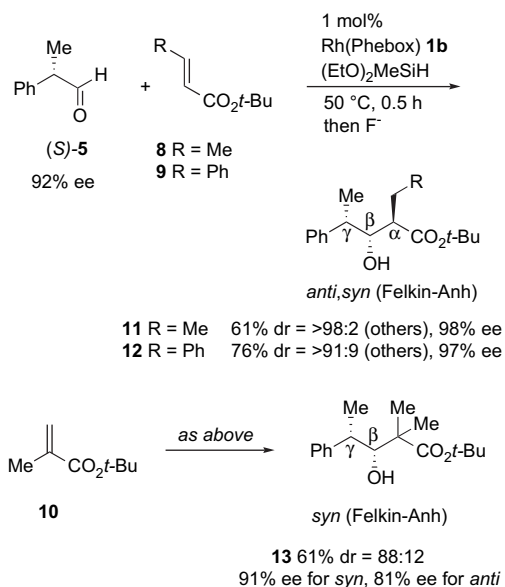


Figure 2. Hypothetical transition model for chiral Rh(Phebox) catalyzed reductive coupling reaction with chiral aldehydes.

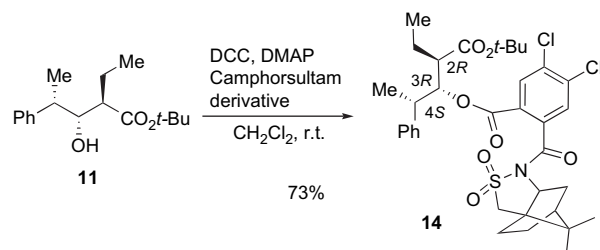


Scheme 3. Coupling reaction of (*S*)-2-phenylpropanal and other α,β -unsaturated esters with chiral Rh(Phebox) catalyst.

4.2. Typical reactions

4.2.1. The reaction of 2-phenylpropionaldehyde and *tert*-butyl acrylate with Rh(Phebox) **1a**

In a 25 mL flask, Rh(Phebox) **1a** (5.4 mg, 0.01 mmol) was placed under argon atmosphere. After toluene (1.0 mL), 2-phenylpropionaldehyde (134 mg, 1.0 mmol), and *tert*-butyl acrylate (256 mg, 2.0 mmol) were added to the flask at room temperature,



Scheme 4. Synthesis of the sulfonamide-ester **14**.

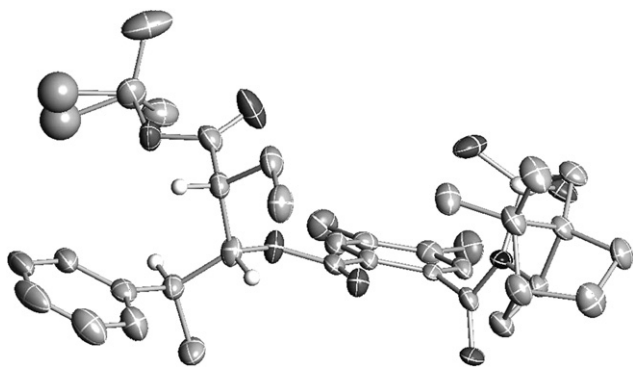


Figure 3. Molecular structure of **14**.

diethoxymethylsilane (295 mg, 2.2 mmol) was added at 50 °C. The mixture was stirred for 30 min at 50 °C. Water (1 mL), methanol (1 mL), KF (5 mmol), and TBAF (1 mL, 1 M in THF) were added, and the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate. The extract was dried over magnesium sulfate, concentrated, and the residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography (ethyl acetate/hexane=20:1 as eluent) to give *tert*-butyl 3-hydroxy-2-methyl-4-phenylpentanoate **7** (222 mg, 0.84 mmol, 84%) as colorless oil; diastereomer ratio of 69:21:7:3 was determined by ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): for CHOH, δ 3.54 (m, *major*), 3.72 (m, *second major*), 4.03 (m, *minor*), 4.00 (m, *minor*); *anti,syn, anti,anti, syn,syn* (tentatively), *syn,anti* (tentatively).

4.2.2. The reaction of (*S*)-2-phenylpropionaldehyde and *tert*-butyl acrylate with Rh(Phebox) **1a**

(*S*)-2-phenylpropionaldehyde (134 mg, 1.0 mmol, 92% ee) was used, which was prepared by use of commercially available (*S*)-(+)-2-phenylpropionic acid via methyl esterification with TMSCHN₂ in MeOH, reduction with DIBAL at –78 °C followed by oxidation with IBX in DMSO at room temperature in ca. 70% yield in three steps. The reaction and purification were carried out as described above to give **7** (223 mg, 0.84 mmol, 84%); diastereomer ratio was 68:20:10:2.

4.2.3. The reaction of (*S*)-2-phenylpropionaldehyde and *tert*-butyl acrylate with Rh(Phebox) **1b**

The reaction with **1b** (5.4 mg, 0.01 mmol) was carried out as described. After the reaction was completed, the mixture was treated with DMF (2.5 mL), water (1 mL), KF (290 mg, 5.0 mmol), and TBAF (1 M in THF, 0.2 mL) at 50 °C for 9 h. After water (15 mL) was added, the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate. After the residue concentrated, dried over magnesium sulfate, and purified by silica gel column chromatography (ethyl acetate/hexane=20:1 as eluent) to give **7** (219 mg, 0.83 mmol, 83%); diastereomer ratio was 88:4:7:1. Compound **7** (major, *anti,syn*): colorless oil; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 1.20 (d, *J*=7.5 Hz, 3H), 1.37 (d, *J*=7.0 Hz, 3H), 1.47 (s, 9H), 2.28 (dq, *J*=4.5, 7.5 Hz, 1H), 2.84 (dq, *J*=7.0, 7.5 Hz, 1H), 3.55 (dd, *J*=4.5, 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.17–7.23 (m, 3H), 7.28–7.32 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): 15.6, 17.1, 28.1, 42.3, 44.5, 78.8, 81.1, 126.5, 127.6, 128.5, 144.7, 176.1; IR (neat) ν 3620–3300, 1727 cm⁻¹; FAB-

HRMS: (M+H) *m/z*, found: 265.1806; calcd (C₁₆H₂₅O₃⁺): 265.1798; LC: DAICEL CHIRALPAC AD-H, eluent=hexane/2-propanol (99:1, 0.7 mL/min), retention time=12.2 min (major), 14.7 min (minor), >99% ee; for second major (*anti,anti*), 17.0 min, 18.0 min. The corresponding methyl ester is a known compound in which α,β-*anti,β,γ-syn*-stereochemistry for the four diastereomers were determined; ¹H NMR spectra were measured in CCl₄.¹¹

4.2.4. The reaction of (*S*)-2-phenylpropionaldehyde and *tert*-butyl crotonate with Rh(Phebox) **1b**

The reaction with **1b** (5.4 mg, 0.01 mmol) and *tert*-butyl crotonate (284 mg, 2.0 mmol) was carried out as described above. After the reaction was completed, the mixture was treated with DMF (2.5 mL), water (1 mL), KF (290 mg, 5.0 mmol), and TBAF (1 M in THF, 0.2 mL) at 50 °C for 16 h. After water (15 mL) was added, the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate. After the residue concentrated, dried over magnesium sulfate, and purified by silica gel column chromatography (ethyl acetate/hexane=20:1 as eluent) to give **11** (171 mg, 0.61 mmol, 61%); diastereomer ratio, 98:2 (others), determined by ¹H NMR. Compound **11** (major, *anti,syn*): colorless oil; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 0.86 (t, *J*=7.5 Hz, 3H), 1.37 (d, *J*=6.5 Hz, 3H), 1.48 (s, 9H), 1.61 (m, 1H), 1.75 (m, 1H), 2.06 (m, 1H), 2.75 (m, 1H), 3.15 (d, *J*=9.5 Hz, 1H), 3.62 (m, 1H), 7.16 (m, 2H), 7.23 (m, 1H), 7.28–7.32 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): 11.7, 18.0, 23.6, 28.2, 45.1, 49.3, 77.1, 81.3, 126.5, 127.6, 128.5, 144.6, 175.8; IR (neat) ν 3620–3300, 1704 cm⁻¹; FAB-HRMS: (M+H) *m/z*, found: 279.1962; calcd (C₁₇H₂₇O₃⁺): 279.1955; LC: DAICEL CHIRALCEL OD-H, eluent=hexane/2-propanol (99:1, 0.7 mL/min), retention time=6.4 min (major), 7.4 min (minor), 98% ee.

4.2.5. The reaction of (*S*)-2-phenylpropionaldehyde and *tert*-butyl cinnamate with Rh(Phebox) **1b**

The reaction with **1b** (5.4 mg, 0.01 mmol) and *tert*-butyl cinnamate (408 mg, 2.0 mmol) was carried out as described above. The compound **12** was obtained in 76% yield (259 mg, 0.76 mmol); diastereomer ratio, 91:9 (others), determined by ¹H NMR; proportion of the other isomers could not determined, the stereochemistry of *anti,syn* was tentatively assigned based on the case of **7**. Compound **12** (major, *anti,syn*): colorless oil; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 1.34 (s, 9H), 1.35 (d, *J*=7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.45 (m, 1H), 2.77 (m, 1H), 2.89 (m, 1H), 2.99 (m, 1H), 3.32 (d, *J*=10.0 Hz, 1H), 3.55 (m, 1H), 7.03–7.07 (m, 4H), 7.17–7.28 (m, 6H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): 18.7, 27.9, 36.3, 45.4, 48.9, 76.4, 81.4, 126.3, 126.5, 127.5, 128.2, 128.5, 129.1, 138.4, 144.4, 175.1; IR (neat) ν 3620–3300, 1698 cm⁻¹; FAB-HRMS: (M+H) *m/z*, found: 341.2112; calcd (C₂₂H₂₉O₃⁺): 341.2111; LC: DAICEL CHIRALPAC AD-H, eluent=hexane/2-propanol (99:1, 0.7 mL/min), retention time=22.8 min (minor), 27.8 min (major), 97% ee.

4.2.6. The reaction of (*S*)-2-phenylpropionaldehyde and *tert*-butyl methacrylate with Rh(Phebox) **1b**

The reaction with **1b** (5.4 mg, 0.01 mmol) and *tert*-butyl methacrylate (284 mg, 2.0 mmol) was carried out as described above. The compound **13** was obtained in 61% (169 mg, 0.61 mmol) as white solids; diastereomer ratio, 88:12, determined by ¹H NMR: for CHO, δ 3.72 (*syn*), 3.81 (*anti*) and for OH, δ 3.19 (*anti*), 3.23 (*syn*); *anti* and *syn* stereochemistry was tentatively assigned. Compound **13** (major, *syn*): ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 1.14 (s, 3H), 1.16 (s, 3H), 1.26 (d, *J*=7.0 Hz, 3H), 1.47 (s, 9H), 2.96 (m, 1H, CHPh), 3.23 (d, *J*=8.5 Hz, 1H, OH), 3.72 (m, 1H), 7.17–7.20 (m, 1H), 7.25–7.30 (m, 4H); (minor, *anti*): 1.14 (s, 3H), 1.20 (s, 3H), 1.31 (d, *J*=7.0 Hz, 3H), 1.32 (s, 9H), 2.92 (m, 1H), 3.19 (d, *J*=8.5 Hz, 1H), 3.81 (m, 1H), 7.17–7.20 (m, 1H), 7.25–7.30 (m, 4H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): 16.5, 21.8, 24.9, 27.9, 41.7, 47.3, 81.0, 81.2, 126.1, 127.6, 128.3, 146.9, 177.3; IR (KBr disk) ν 3620–3300, 1701 cm⁻¹; FAB-HRMS: (M+H) *m/z*, found: 279.1974; calcd (C₁₇H₂₇O₃⁺): 279.1955; LC: DAICEL CHIRALPAC AD-H, eluent=hexane/2-propanol (99:1, 0.7 mL/min),

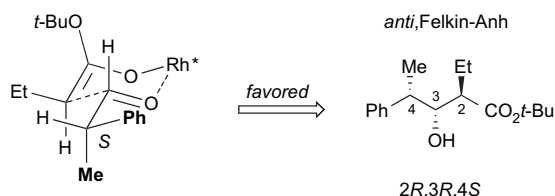


Figure 4. Hypothetical transition state.

retention time: for *syn*, 20.0 min (major), 30.5 min (minor), 91% ee; for *anti*, 12.8 min (minor), 14.1 min (major), 81% ee.

4.3. Synthesis of sulfonamide-ester 14

To a solution of **11** (84 mg, 0.30 mmol, >98% ee) and *N*-(2-carboxy-4,5-dichlorobenzoyl)-(–)-10,2-camphorsultam (TCI-1683) (195 mg, 0.45 mmol) in dichloromethane (8 mL), DCC (93 mg, 0.45 mmol) and DMAP (5.5 mg) were added at 0 °C, and then the mixture was stirred for 6 days at room temperature. After filtration through Celite column, the filtrate was concentrated to give the crude product, which was purified by silica gel column chromatography (ethyl acetate/hexane as eluent) to give the corresponding sulfonamide ester (**14**; 153 mg, 0.22 mmol, 73%). Compound **14**: white solids; mp: 117–118 °C; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 0.069 (s, 1H), 0.74 (t, *J*=7.5 Hz, 3H), 0.97 (s, 3H), 1.20–1.23 (m, 6H), 1.30 (m, 1H), 1.47 (m, 1H), 1.51 (s, 9H), 1.64 (m, 1H), 1.95 (m, 3H), 2.15–2.26 (m, 2H), 2.53 (m, 1H), 3.33 (m, 1H), 3.39 (d, *J*=14.0 Hz, 1H), 3.43 (d, *J*=14.0 Hz, 1H), 4.10 (m, 1H), 5.37 (dd, *J*=11.0, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 7.20–7.25 (m, 1H), 7.28–7.35 (m, 4H), 7.53 (s, 1H), 8.21 (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): 1.0, 11.8, 19.1, 20.1, 20.8, 22.6, 26.5, 26.9, 28.2, 33.1, 37.7, 42.5, 44.7, 47.8, 48.5, 49.9, 53.0, 65.7, 79.3, 80.8, 126.9, 127.8, 128.0, 128.7, 131.1, 131.6, 134.6, 135.4, 137.0, 143.1, 162.7, 165.2, 171.1; IR (KBr disk) ν 1729, 1678 cm⁻¹; FAB-HRMS: (M+H) *m/z*, found: 692.2200; calcd (C₃₅H₄₄Cl₂NO₇S⁺): 692.2210; [α]_D²⁵ –42.6 (c 1.09, CHCl₃).

4.4. X-ray analysis of 14

Single crystals of **14** suitable for X-ray diffraction study were obtained from a hot hexane solution. The diffraction data were collected on a Bruker SMART APEX CCD diffractometer with graphite monochromated Mo K α radiation (λ =0.71073 Å). An empirical absorption correction was applied using SADABS. The structure was solved by direct method and refined by full-matrix least-square on *F*² using SHELXTL. All non-hydrogen atoms except the disordered atoms and the solvent molecule were refined with anisotropic displacement parameters. The disorders at C17 and C50–52 were refined in the ratio of 35:65 and 62:38, respectively. Crystallographic data for **14**: C₃₈H₅₀Cl₂NO₇S; *M*_r=735.75; temperature 133 K; monoclinic, *P*₂₁₂₁; *a*=14.548(6), *b*=18.519(8), *c*=28.785(12) Å; *V*=7755(6) Å³; *Z*=8; ρ_{calcd} =1.260 Mg/m³; μ =0.269 mm⁻¹; reflections collected 55 697, independent reflections 18 068 [*R*(int)=0.0898]; data/restraints/parameters 18 068/46/874; goodness-of-fit on *F*²: 0.992; final *R* indices [*I*>2 σ (*I*)] *R*₁=0.0662, *wR*₂=0.1398; *R* indices (all data) *R*₁=0.1225, *wR*₂=0.1639; largest diff. peak/hole 0.471 and –0.478 e Å⁻³. CCDC 690605 contains the supplementary crystallographic data. The data can be obtained free of charge via <http://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk> or

from The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12, Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK; deposit@ccdc.cam.ac.uk.

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Supplementary data

Analysis for NMR, IR, and LC charts of the products are provided. Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.tet.2008.07.092.

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