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## Expanding the family of bis-cyclometalated chiral-at-metal rhodium(III) catalysts with a benzothiazole derivative†

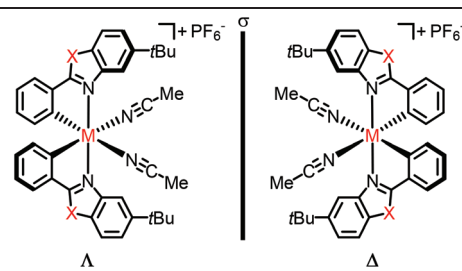
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**Synthetic access to previously elusive single enantiomers of an octahedral chiral-at-metal rhodium(III) complex containing two cyclometalated 2-phenylbenzothiazoles and two acetonitrile ligands is reported. The complex is a superior chiral Lewis acid catalyst compared to its benzoxazole congener which can be rationalized with a higher steric congestion around the coordination sites.**

Chiral Lewis acids play an important role in asymmetric catalysis because many reactions are amenable to Lewis acid activation.<sup>1</sup> Recently, we introduced a new class of chiral Lewis acids based on octahedral iridium(III)<sup>2–7</sup> and rhodium(III)<sup>8–11</sup> complexes which draw their chirality exclusively from the metal-centered chirality (metal centrochirality).<sup>12,13</sup> These chiral-only-at-metal complexes are cyclometalated by two 5-*tert*-butyl-2-phenylbenzoxazoles or the analogous benzothiazole ligands in addition to two exchange-labile acetonitriles, which generates a C<sub>2</sub>-symmetric, propeller-type geometry.

Whereas the iridium complexes  $\Lambda/\Delta$ -IrO and  $\Lambda/\Delta$ -IrS have been demonstrated to be excellent catalysts for visible light induced photoredox reactions,<sup>3,4,6,7</sup> the rhodium congener  $\Lambda/\Delta$ -RhO features advantages for regular Lewis acid catalysis,<sup>8–10</sup> apparently due to a more rapid ligand exchange kinetics (Table 1). We expected that the related complex  $\Lambda/\Delta$ -RhS, in which the coordinating benzoxazole moieties are replaced by benzothiazoles, should provide a higher asymmetric induction due to an increased bond length of C–S over C–O which will position the two *tert*-butyl groups somewhat closer to the substrate coordination site. Here we disclose the previously elusive access to the enantiomerically pure benzothiazole complexes  $\Lambda$ - and  $\Delta$ -RhS, characterize their structures and configurational

**Table 1** Overview of bis-cyclometalated, chiral-only-at-metal iridium and rhodium catalysts<sup>a</sup>



Entry	Complex	M	X	Remarks
1	$\Lambda$ - and $\Delta$ -IrO	Ir	O	Ref. 2 and 4
2	$\Lambda$ - and $\Delta$ -IrS	Ir	S	Ref. 3 and 5–7
3	$\Lambda$ - and $\Delta$ -RhO	Rh	O	Ref. 8–11
4	$\Lambda$ - and $\Delta$ -RhS	Rh	S	This study

<sup>a</sup> Synthesis by an auxiliary-mediated strategy.

stability, and demonstrate their excellent performance as asymmetric catalysts.

The auxiliary-mediated synthesis<sup>14–18</sup> starts with rhodium trichloride hydrate which is first converted into *rac*-RhS in a yield of 73% by reaction with 2 equiv. of 5-*tert*-butyl-2-phenylbenzothiazole (**1**), followed by a treatment with 1.2 equiv. of AgPF<sub>6</sub> in MeCN (Fig. 1). The complex *rac*-RhS is then reacted with the monofluorinated salicyloxazoline (*S*)-**2**<sup>19</sup> to provide a diastereomeric mixture of  $\Lambda$ -(*S*)-**3** and  $\Delta$ -(*S*)-**3** which can be resolved into pure diastereomers (46% each) based on their different solubilities in EtOH or by silica gel chromatography, or a combination thereof depending on the reaction scale. Configurations were assigned based on the crystal structure of  $\Lambda$ -(*S*)-**3** as shown in Fig. 2. Finally, starting with  $\Lambda$ -(*S*)-**3** and  $\Delta$ -(*S*)-**3**, an acid induced replacement of the coordinated auxiliary ligand with two acetonitriles under retention of the configuration affords the individual enantiomers  $\Lambda$ -RhS (85%) and  $\Delta$ -RhS (80%). The key aspect of this auxiliary-mediated synthesis is the fluorinated auxiliary (*S*)-**2** which was first

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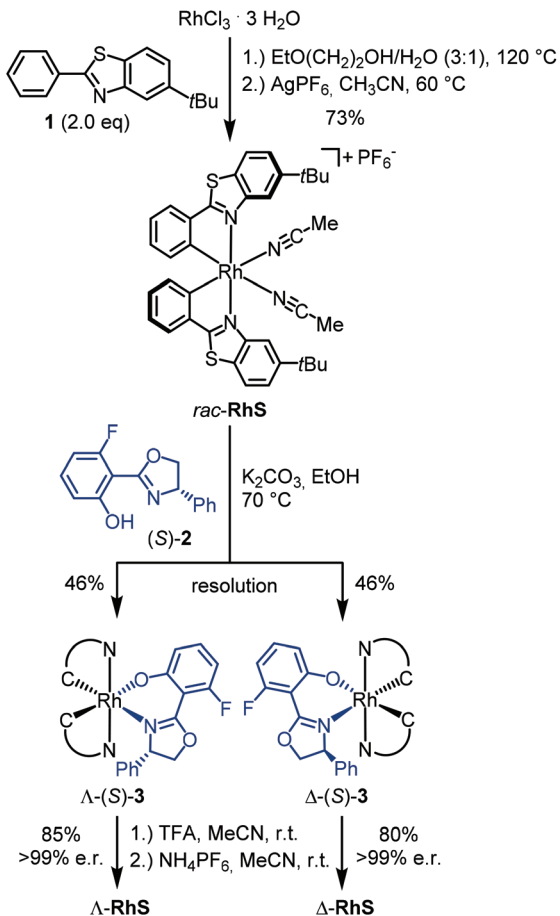


Fig. 1 Auxiliary-mediated synthesis of  $\Lambda$ - and  $\Delta$ -RhS.

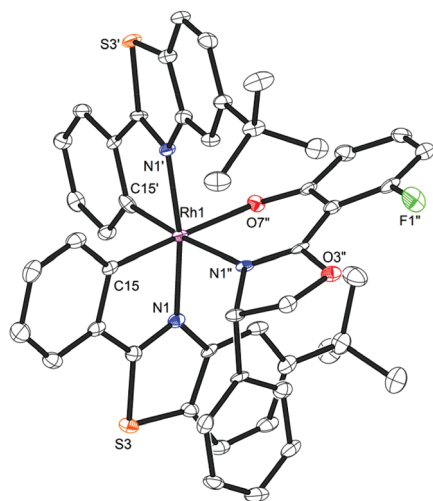


Fig. 2 Crystal structure of the auxiliary complex  $\Lambda$ -(S)-3. ORTEP drawing with 50% thermal ellipsoids. CCDC number 1455732.

introduced by Ceroni and co-workers.<sup>19</sup> All other tested auxiliaries did not provide intermediate rhodium auxiliary complexes with distinct solubilities and were not stable enough for a resolution *via* silica gel chromatography.

The CD spectra of the complexes  $\Lambda$ - and  $\Delta$ -RhS are shown in Fig. 3, and confirm their mirror-imaged structures. HPLC performed on a chiral stationary phase validates the high enantiomeric purity of the individual enantiomers (Fig. 4).<sup>20</sup> For the  $\Delta$ -enantiomer an er of 99.9 : 0.1 was determined, while peak tailing prevents an accurate validation of the  $\Lambda$ -enantiomer and an er of >99 : 1 was estimated.

Fig. 5 shows the superimposed crystal structures of  $\Lambda$ -RhS and mirror-imaged  $\Delta$ -RhO, not only confirming the assigned metal-centered configuration of  $\Lambda$ -RhS, but also revealing the differences in how the two *tert*-butyl groups flank the coordination site around the two exchange-labile acetonitrile ligands. In comparison with RhO, the *tert*-butyl groups of RhS are in closer proximity to the labile acetonitriles as quantified by a 0.9 Å shorter intramolecular distance between the quaternary carbons of the two *tert*-butyl groups in RhS (10.5 Å) over RhO (11.4 Å). This is consistent and analogous with a comparison of the related benzoxazole and benzothiazole iridium complexes.<sup>3,5</sup>

The increased steric hindrance provided by the two *tert*-butyl groups should make RhS an improved asymmetric catalyst for many applications. This is confirmed by the preliminary results shown in Fig. 6. In both enantioselective Michael addition<sup>8</sup> and a photoinduced enantioselective radical reaction,<sup>11</sup> the determined enantioselectivities are appreciably

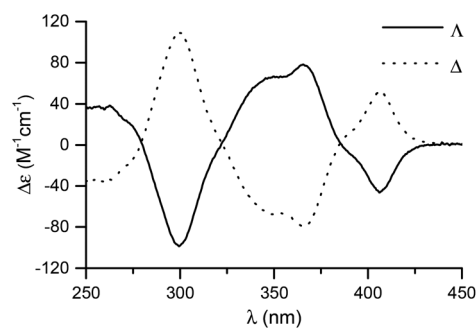


Fig. 3 CD spectra of  $\Lambda$ - and  $\Delta$ -RhS recorded in  $\text{CH}_3\text{OH} : \text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  4 : 1.

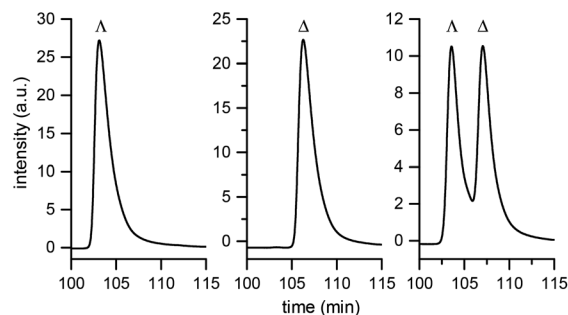
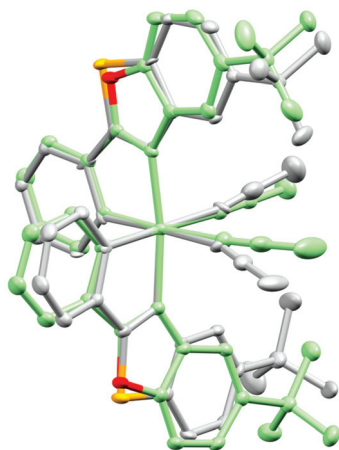
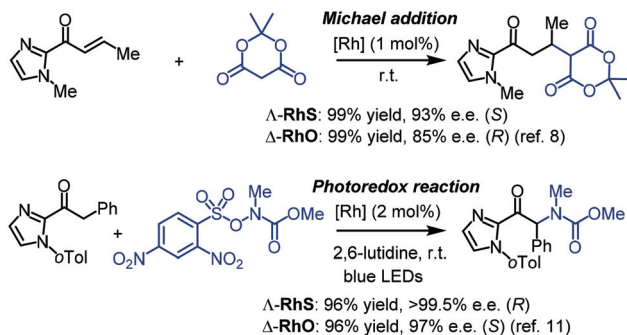


Fig. 4 HPLC traces of racemic,  $\Lambda$ - and  $\Delta$ -RhS. HPLC conditions: Daicel CHIRALPAK IB, 250 × 4.6 mm, column temp. = 25 °C,  $\lambda_{\text{abs}}$  = 254 nm, flow rate = 0.6 mL min<sup>-1</sup>, solvent A = 0.1% aqueous TFA, solvent B = MeCN, gradient = 40% to 50% B in 180 min.





**Fig. 5** Superimposed crystal structure of  $\Delta$ -RhS (grey) with inverted  $\Delta$ -RhO (green). Fitted is the central metal together with the metal-bound atoms. Atoms are displayed as 50% thermal ellipsoids. CCDC number 1455731 ( $\Delta$ -RhS).



**Fig. 6** Comparison of catalytic performances of  $\Delta$ -RhS and  $\Delta$ -RhO.

higher for the benzothiazole (**RhS**) over the benzoxazole (**RhO**) catalyst.<sup>21</sup>

In conclusion, here we reported a new chiral-at-metal benzothiazole complex  $\Delta/\Delta$ -RhS which expands the family of bis-cyclometalated rhodium(III) complexes for applications in asymmetric catalysis. Compared to the previously reported benzoxazole complex  $\Delta/\Delta$ -RhO, the benzothiazole ligands in  $\Delta/\Delta$ -RhS provide a higher steric congestion around the labile acetonitrile ligands, thereby making  $\Delta/\Delta$ -RhS a superior asymmetric catalyst. Applications of the new chiral Lewis acid catalyst to challenging asymmetric transformations are underway in our laboratory.

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