## Synthesis of Imidazoles, 2-Pyrrolines and Pyrrolidines via Phospha-Münchnone Cycloadditions

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A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Science

Department of Chemistry McGill University, Montréal July 2013 © Sara Aly, 2013.

## Abstract

This thesis describes the use of a new class of dipole, phospha-Münchnones, in 1,3dipolar cycloaddition reactions. Phospha-Münchnones can be readily prepared from imines, acid chlorides and the catechyl-substituted phosphonite PhP(2-catechyl). Coupling the multicomponent formation of these dipoles with subsequent cycloaddition has provided modular, one-pot syntheses of a number of heterocycles. In Chapter 1, an overview of the utility of imines in 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions is provided. This includes their use in the synthesis of aromatic nitrogen-containing heterocycles such as of pyrroles, oxadiazoline, imidazoles, triazoles and their reduced analogues.

In Chapter 2, research towards the synthesis of imidazoles through the cycloaddition of electron deficient *N*-nosyl imines with phosha-Münchnones is described. This transformation allows the direct generation of densely substituted imidazoles in a one-pot fashion, and with high regioselectivity. The methodology is also modular, where the substitution pattern can be altered by simple variation of the building blocks (imine, acid chloride and *N*-nosyl imine). Alternatively, *N*-nosyl substituted imines can be replaced by nitriles in intramolecular cycloaddition reactions. This allows the synthesis of polycyclic imidazoles from nitrile-tethered imines and acid chlorides. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first report of intamolecular nitrile dipolar cycloaddition reactions in imidazole synthesis.

Chapter 3 focuses on the intramolecular cycloaddition of phospha-Münchnones with olefins. The resulting polycyclic 2-pyrrolines are prepared in good yields with high diastereoand regio-selectivity from olefin-tethered imines, acid chlorides and phosphonites. Further reactions of these *N*-heterocycles are also investigated, including the formation of substituted pyrrolidines under reductive conditions.

#### Résumé

Cette thèse décrit l'utilisation d'une nouvelle classe de 1,3-dipôle, le phospha-Münchnone, dans la préparation d'hétérocycles azotés. Le phospha-Münchnone peut être facilement préparé à partir d'imines, de chlorures d'acides et de composés organophosphorés (2catechyl)PhP. Le couplage sélectif de ces composés suivi d'une réaction de cycloaddition permettent la synthèse d'une variété de composés hétérocycliques de façon modulaire et rapide. Dans le Chapitre 1, un aperçu est présenté en ce qui a trait à l'utilité des imines dans les réactions de cycloadditions 1,3-dipolaires. Cela inclut également leur rôle dans la synthèse d'hétérocycles aromatiques contenant un azote tels que les pyrroles, les imidazoles, les oxadiazolines, les triazoles et leurs analogues réduits.

Dans le Chapitre 2, la synthèse d'imidazoles par cycloaddition d'imines électrons pauvres avec le phospha-Münchnone est décrite. Cette réaction permet la formation directe d'imidazoles hautement substitués de façon « one-pot », et avec une grande régiosélectivité. La méthode est également modulaire, où le modèle de substitution peut être modifiée par simple variation des briques moléculaires (imine, chlorure d'acide et imine N-nosyl). D'autre part, les imines substituées N-nosyl peuvent être remplacées par des nitriles lors des cycloadditions intramoléculaires. Cela permet la synthèse d'imidazoles polycycliques avec des imines contenant un nitrile et des chlorures d'acides. À notre connaissance, cela représente le premier exemple de réaction de cycloaddition intramoléculaire à partir de nitriles non-électrons pauvres dans la synthèse d'imidazole.

Le Chapitre 3 se concentre sur la cycloaddition intramoléculaire du phospha-Münchnone avec des oléfines. Les 2-pyrrolines polycycliques qui en résultent sont préparées de façon efficace avec une grande diastéréo- et régiosélectivité à partir d'imines contenant un alcène, de chlorures d'acides et de phosphonites. D'autres synthèses de N-hétérocycles sont également étudiées, y compris la formation de pyrrolidines substituées dans des conditions réductrices.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Allah for granting me this opportunity and providing me with the strength to complete this degree amidst my hard times.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Bruce Arndtsen for giving me the chance to complete my Master's degree under his supervision, giving me advice and the privilege of being among his highly skilled group members. Thanks to all the former and current group members including Dr. ZhiYoung Han, Laure Kayser, Seungguk Kim, Dr. David Leitch, Dr. Fabio Lorenzini, Jeffrey Quesnel, Jevgenijs Tjutrins and Boran Xu, whom I had the honor to work with, engage in great discussions, and benefit from their professional advice--all within an amazing ambience to work in. A special thanks goes out to Marie Morin for all the time and effort she spent in training and advising me throughout the completion of this degree.

The contributions from the support staff including Georges Kopp, Chantal Marotte Dr. Fred Morin, Claude Perryman, Rick Rossi, Nadim Saade, Dr. Sean Wahba, and Weihua Wang is greatly appreciated as their help was essential for the completion of my degree.

Lastly, I'd like to thank my family and friends for enduring me these last three years, each and every one of you provided me with immeasurable aid in the completion of this degree, and for that, I dedicate this thesis to you.

Abstract	2
	2
Resume	
Acknowledgements	4
Table of Contents	5
List of Schemes	7
List of Figures	8
List of Tables	8
List of Abbreviations	9
CHAPTER ONE	11
Introduction: Characteristics and 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition of Imines	11
1.1 Perspective	11
1.2 General Features of 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition	15
1.2.1 Reactivity	16
1.2.2 Regioselectivity	17
1.3 Imines in 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition	18
1.3.1 Imine-Based in 1,3-Dipoles	18
1.4 Imines as Dipolarophiles	23
1.4.1 Azomethine Ylides Cycloaddition	23
1.4.2 Azomethine Imines	24
1.4.3 Diazomethane	25
1.4.4 Carbonyl Ylides	25
1.4.5 Carbonyl Imines	26
1.4.6 Nitrile Oxides	26
1.4.7 Carbon 1,3-Dipoles	26
1.4.8 Münchnones	27
1.5 Overview of Thesis	30
1.6 References	31
CHAPTER TWO	33
Synthesis of Highly Substituted and Fused-Ring Imidazoles via Phospha-Münchnone	22
2.1 Introduction	22
2.1 Introduction	25 26
2.2 Results and Discussion	00
2.2.1 Imme Cycloaddition with Phospha- Munchnone	30

## **Table of Contents**

2.2.2 Scope of Substituted Imidazoles	
2.2.3 Synthesis of Polycyclic Imidazoles	41
2.3 Conclusions	44
2.4 Experimental	45
2.4.1 General Procedures	45
2.4.2 Typical Nitrile-Tethered Imine Synthesis	45
2.4.3 Spectroscopic Data	45
2.4.4 Synthesis of Tetra-Substituted Imidazoles 2.5	47
2.4.5 Synthesis of Polycyclic Imidazoles 2.7	49
2.5 References	52
CHAPTER THREE	54
Synthesis of Polycyclic 2-Pyrrolines via Phospha-Münchnone Cycloaddition	54
3.1 Introduction	54
3.2 Results and Discussion	56
3.2.1 Alkene-Tethered Imine Synthesis	56
3.2.2 Scope of Polycyclic 2-Pyrroline Synthesis	58
3.2.3 Reduction of 2-Pyrrolines to Pyrrolidines	61
3.3 Conclusions	62
3.4 Experimental	63
3.4.1 General Procedures	63
3.4.2 Synthesis of Olefin-Tethered Aldehydes	63
3.4.3 Typical Synthesis of Imines	65
3.4.4 Spectroscopic Data	65
3.4.5 Synthesis of Pyrrolines	67
3.4.6 Synthesis of Pyrrolidines	69
3.5 References	
CONCLUSIONS	
APPENDIX A <sup>1</sup> H and <sup>13</sup> CNMR Spectra of Nitrile Tethered Imines and Imidazoles	
APPENDIX B <sup>1</sup> H and <sup>13</sup> C NMR Spectra of Olefin-Tethered Imines and 2-Pyrrolines	

## List of Schemes

Scheme 1.1 Imines: Preparation and Exchange Reactions	11
Scheme 1.2 Reactivity of Imines	14
Scheme 1.3 Cycloaddition Reactions of Imines	15
Scheme 1.4 Valence Bond Resonance Structures on 1,3-Dipoles	15
Scheme 1.5 Regiochemistry of 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition Reactions	17
Scheme 1.6 Synthesis of Azomethine Ylides	19
Scheme 1.7 Synthesis of Highly Functionalized Pyrrolidines and Pyrrolines from Azomethine	e
Ylides	20
Scheme 1.8 Synthesis of Azomethine Imines	20
Scheme 1.9 Synthesis of Pyrazolidines and Pyrazolines from Azomethine Imines	20
Scheme 1.10 Synthesis of Isoxazolines and Isoxazoles from Cycloaddition of Nitrile Oxides	with
Alkenes and Alkynes	21
Scheme 1.11 Paladium-Catalyzed Synthesis of Münchnones	21
Scheme 1.12 Synthesis of Nitrogen-Containing Heterocycles via Münchnone Cycloaddition	22
Scheme 1.13 Synthesis of Münchnone Imines	22
Scheme 1.14 Synthesis of Phospha-Münchones	22
Scheme 1.15 Imidazolidine Synthesis Using Nonstabilized Azomethine Ylides	23
Scheme 1.16 Disastereoselective Imidazolidines via Chiral Sulfimine Mediated Cycloaddition	n
Reactions.	24
Scheme 1.17 1,2,4-Triazoline Synthesis	24
Scheme 1.18 1,2,3-Triazoline Synthesis via 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition of Azomethane and	
Imines	25
Scheme 1.29 Carbonyl Dipoles in Oxazolidine Synthesis	25
Scheme 1.20 Stereoselective Synthesis of Oxadiazolidine	26
Scheme 1.21 Synthesis of 1,2,4-Oxadiazolines	26
Scheme 1.22 Cycloaddition of Carbon-Based 1,3-Dipoles with Imines	27
Scheme 1.23 Synthesis of Münchnones from Dehydration of α-Amido Acids	27
Scheme 1.24 Münchnone-Mediated Synthesis of Substituted Imidazoles	28
Scheme 1.25 Cycloaddition Reactions of N-Phenylsulfonyl Unsaturated Imines.	28
Scheme 1.26 Palladium-Catalyzed Synthesis of Imidazolines	28
Scheme 1.27 Silicon mediated 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions	29
Scheme 1.28 Modular Catalytic Synthesis of Tetra-Substituted Imidazoles	29
Scheme 2.1 Cyclocondensation Approaches to Imidazoles.	
Scheme 2.2 Imidazole Synthesis via Hetero-Cope Rearrangement	34
Scheme 2.3 Substitution Reactions on Pre-Synthesized Imidazoles.	34
Scheme 2.4 Münchnone-Mediated Synthesis of Imidazoles.	35
Scheme 2.5 Palladium Catalyzed, Multicomponent Synthesis of Imidazoles	35
Scheme 2.6 Modular Design of Phosphorus Based 1,3-Dipole	36
Scheme 2.7 Phospha-Münchnone Mediated Synthesis of Imidazole.	36

Scheme 2.8 Control Experiment of Phospha-Münchnone and p-Toluene Sulfinate	37
Scheme 2.9 Phosphorus Mediated Intramolecular Cycloaddition Reaction	
Scheme 3.1 Assembly of Phospha-Münchnone	55
Scheme 3.2 Synthesis of Olefin-Tethered Imine and Imine Precursors.	58
Scheme 3.3 Reaction Mechanism of Polycyclic Pyrrolines.	59
Scheme 3.4 Aliphatic Olefin-Tetehred Imines	61
Scheme 3.5 Transformations of Reactive 2-Pyrrolines.	61

# List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Imine Containing Compounds in Pharmaceuticals and Fragrances	12
Figure 1.2 Examples of the Classes of Chelating Schiff Base Ligands	12
Figure 1.3 Uses of Imine Based Metal Complexes	13
Figure 1.4 Reactivity Profile of Imines	13
Figure 1.5 Sustmann's Classification of 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition Reactions	16
Figure 3.1 Structure of Natural and Biologically Active 2-Pyrrolines	54

## List of Tables

Table 1.1 Münchnone Cycloadditions with Methyl Propiolate	18
Table 2.1 Screening of Electron Deficient Imines.	
Table 2.2 Development of Phosphine Mediated Synthesis of Imidazoles	
Table 2.3 Scope of Tetra-Substituted Imidazole.	40
Table 2.4 Scope of Polycyclic Imidazoles.	43
Table 3.1. Development of PR3 Mediated Pyrroline Synthesis.	56
Table 3.2 Scope of Polycyclic Pyrrolines.	60

## List of Abbreviations

Ac – Acetate

Ar – Aryl

Bn – Benzyl

°C – Degrees Celsius

Catechyl (cat) – o-O<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>

Cy-Cyclohexyl

DBU-1,8-Diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene

DCCI – Dicyclohexylcarbodiimide

DMF – Dimethylformamide

d-doublet

eq - Equivalents

Et – Ethyl

EWG - Electron withdrawing group

FMO - Frontier molecular orbital

h - Hour(s)

Hex-Hexyl

HOMO - Highest occupied molecular orbital

HRMS - High resolution mass spectrometry

Hz – Hertz

J- coupling constant

L.A – Lewis Acid

LDA – Lithium diisopropulamide

LiHMDS - Lithium hexamethyldisilazane

LUMO - Lowest occupied molecular orbital

m-multiplet

MAO – Methylaluminoxane

Me-Methyl

min - Minute(s)

MS - Mass spectrum

NBS - N-Bromosuccinimide

n-BuLi - n-ButylLithium

NMR-Nuclear magnetic resonance

Ns - Nosyl

PG - Protecting group

Ph – Phenyl

Ph – Phenyl

 $PMP - p-CH_3OC_6H_4$ 

ppm – Parts per million

p-Tol – p-CH<sub>3</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>

q – Quartet

rt - Room temperature

s – singlet

t – triplet

t-BuOK - Potassium tert-butoxide

TFA-Trifluoroacetic Acid

THF - Tetrahydrofuran

TMS – Trimethyl silane

TMSOTf - Trimethylsilyl trifluoromethanesulfonate

Ts - Tosyl

#### **CHAPTER ONE**

## Introduction: Characteristics and 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition of Imines

### **1.1 Perspective**

Imines are a useful class of building blocks in organic synthesis.<sup>1</sup> An important feature of imines is the ease of their synthesis. This is typically performed by the simple condensation of primary amines with aldehydes and ketones (Scheme 1.1). Since these substrates are commercially available in multiple forms, a diverse range of imines can be generated by this reaction. The synthesis of imines was first discovered by German chemist, Hugo Schiff, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> As such, these products are often referred to as Schiff's bases. Other names include azomethines, anils, and the more widely accepted imines.



Scheme 1.1 Imines: Preparation and Exchange Reactions

The condensation reaction to form imines is driven forward by the reversible liberation of water. This reversibility allows access to equilibrium-controlled reactions, including hydrolysis to give starting aldehyde and amine, metathesis, and exchange reactions.

Imine products have found utility in a wide range of areas. For example, they are components in a variety of biologically active compounds (Fig. 1.1). Illustrative examples include rhodopsin **1.2a**,<sup>3</sup> found in the biological system of retinal (vitamin A aldehyde), as well as Huperzine  $A^4$  **1.2b** and substituted imines<sup>5</sup> **1.2c**, have been proven important in medicinal chemistry. In addition, imines are equally important in chemistry of fragrances **1.2d**.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 1.1 Imine Containing Compounds in Pharmaceuticals and Fragrances

Due to the coordinating ability of the nitrogen atom, imines are also commonly used as metal-bonding ligands. These are often within chelates, where neighboring coordinating groups can help associate these substrates to metals (Figure 1.2).<sup>7</sup> These metal complexes have found utility in many venues,<sup>8</sup> including as biologically active molecules,<sup>9</sup> optically active materials,<sup>10</sup> and catalysts.<sup>7b</sup> Representative examples are shown in Figure 1.3.



Figure 1.2 Examples of Chelating Schiff Base Ligands



Figure 1.3 Uses of Imine Based Metal Complexes

Likely the most important current application of imines is as synthetic build blocks. The combination of the electronegative nitrogen atom and the electron deficient carbon gives imines a diverse reactivity profile (Figure 1.4).



Figure 1.4 General Reactivity Profile of Imines

A common application of imines is as electrophiles in nucleophilic attack reactions.<sup>11</sup> Simple *N*-alkyl or *N*-aryl imines are not highly electrophilic. However, their reactivity can be enhanced by electron withdrawing nitrogen substituents (Scheme 1.2a)<sup>12</sup> or the use of acidic catalysts (Scheme 1.2b).<sup>13</sup> Imines can also be readily reduced (Scheme 1.2c),<sup>14</sup> often by exploiting the polarized C=N bond.



Scheme 1.2 Reactivity of Imines

Alternatively, imines possess a  $\pi$ -bond that has made them useful substrates in cycloaddition reactions. A common use of imines is in hetero Diels-Alder reactions (Scheme 1.3).<sup>15</sup> When coupled with the range of available imines, this has provided a general platform to assemble 6-membered ring heterocycles.



Scheme 1.3 Cycloaddition Reactions of Imines

Another transformation of imines is 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition. This reaction can provide an efficient method to generate 5-membered ring nitrogen-containing heterocycles; which are a classic structure in pharmaceutical design. The latter reactivity will be the subject of Chapter 1 of this thesis.

## 1.2 General Features of 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition

1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions provide an atom economical approach to prepare 5membered ring products.<sup>16</sup> 1,3-dipoles are typically comprised of a four  $\pi$ -electron system delocalized over the three atoms (X-Y-Z). The formed positive and negative charges are spread amongst these atoms through various resonance structures. Notably, non-radical resonance structures cannot be drawn that eliminate the charges **1.4a-1.4d** (Scheme 1.4). The reactive behavior of dipoles is typically attributed to their ambiphilic behavior, as they behave as both nucleophiles and electrophiles.



Scheme 1.4 Valence Bond Resonance Structures on 1,3-Dipoles

Mechanistically, cycloaddition of the dipole with a dipolarophile occurs in a six  $\pi$ electron [ $_{\pi}4_{s} + _{\pi}2_{s}$ ] fashion by a thermally allowed suprafacial process. The reaction often proceeds via a concerted mechanism, although both bonds may not be formed equally in the transition state.

#### 1.2.1 Reactivity

The reactivity of 1,3-dipoles, much like simple unsaturated substrates, is often explained using frontier molecular orbital (FMO) theory. FMO theory explains reactivity based upon interactions between the highest occupied molecular orbital (HOMO) and the lowest unoccupied molecular orbital (LUMO) of the substrates. The theory stipulates that the most rapid cycloaddition will occur between reactants that have the smallest HOMO (substrate 1) – LUMO (substrate 2) energy difference, as this leads to significant overlap in the transition state.<sup>17</sup>

With this as a basis, three possible scenarios can occur during cycloaddition. These are referred to as Sustmann-type interactions (Figure 1.5).<sup>18</sup> Reactions of electron rich dipoles (high HOMO energy) with electron-poor and low energy LUMO dipolarophiles are often called Sustmann type I cycloadditions (HOMO<sub>dipole</sub>-LUMO<sub>dipolarophile</sub>). Alternatively, cycloadditions between a low LUMO energy dipole and high HOMO energy dipolarophile are type III (HOMO<sub>dipolarophile</sub>-LUMO<sub>dipole</sub>). Reactions with similar HOMO-LUMO energy gaps are called type II cycloadditions.



Figure 1.5 Sustmann's Classification of 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition Reactions

The relative HOMO-LUMO energies, and thus their reactivity, depend on the nature of the dipole and dipolarophile. For example, azomethine ylides (vide infra) are typically electron rich dipoles, and react via Sustmann Type I cycloaddition.<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, more heteroatom rich dipoles such as nitrile oxides and azides have low LUMO energies, and generally react most rapidly with electron rich dipolarophiles.<sup>20</sup> A range of dipoles display type II behavior.<sup>16</sup>

## 1.2.2 Regioselectivity

FMO theory is also useful to interpret the regioselectivity of 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions. Reactions of unsymmetrical 1,3-dipoles and dipolarophiles can lead to regioisomeric products. The regiochemical outcome of these reactions is highly dependent on the substrates, and is controlled by both electronic and steric factors.<sup>20</sup> FMO theory rationalizes the electronic influences on regioselectivity based upon the combination of atoms with large orbital coefficients in the 1,3-dipole and dipolarophile.<sup>21</sup> A general example of this is shown in Scheme 1.5.



Scheme 1.5 Regiochemistry of 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition Reactions

The relative coefficients in the FMOs are influenced by the atoms in the dipole, dipolarophile, and the substituents. The latter can also be used to tune reactivity. For example, an electron-withdrawing group on the dipolarophile can enhance their reactivity with electron rich dipoles (Type I cycloaddition) and increase regioselectivity, by creating a more biased LUMO orbital.

However, it is not always straightforward to predict product regioselectivity. A major complicating issue can be steric effects. These can either cooperate or compete with electronic effects, and in some cases override the electronic preference. This behavior is illustrated in the

cycloaddition of mesoionic compounds such as 1,3-oxazolium-5-olates (Münchnones) with alkynes. Münchnones are electron rich dipoles, and display Type I Sustmann reactivity behavior. Based upon orbital coefficients, these reactions are expected to lead to regioisomeric products where the alkyne electron withdrawing unit is directed away from R<sup>1</sup> (Table 1.1). However, Trost has demonstrated that the regiochemistry in these reactions are more influence by steric interaction than FMO effects, and proceed via an unsymmetrical transition state.<sup>22</sup> These reactions often lead to the favored formation of the pyrrole isomer where the two smallest units are cis, regardless of electronic influences.

Table 1.1 Münchnone Cycloadditions with Methyl Propiolate



#### 1.3 Imines in 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition

#### 1.3.1 Imine-Based in 1,3-Dipoles

Imines have found utility as precursors to a number of 1,3-dipoles. Likely the most commonly employed imine-based 1,3-dipole is azomethine ylides (Scheme 1.6). A number of methods have been developed to access these dipoles. One of the simplest is through either the deprotonation of iminum salts (Scheme 1.6a),<sup>23</sup> or the tautomerization of imines (Scheme 1.6b).<sup>24</sup> Both of these reactions are facilitated by electron withdrawing units on the  $\alpha$ -carbon to the imine nitrogen. Other routes to these dipoles include the ring-opening of aziridines (Scheme 1.6c),<sup>25</sup> nucleophilic additions to oxazolium salts (Scheme 1.6d),<sup>26</sup> the decarboxylation of amino acids (Scheme 1.6e)<sup>27</sup> as well as silicon-based protocols (Scheme 1.6f).<sup>28</sup> Together, these methods can be used to generate a variety of azomethine ylides.



(a) Deprotonation of Iminium Salts



(b) Tautomerization of Imines



(c) Ring Opening of Aziridines



(d) Nucleophilic Addition to Oxazolium Salts





(f) Desilylation Reactions

Scheme 1.6 Synthesis of Azomethine Ylides

Due to their high reactivity, azomethine ylides are usually prepared and used *in situ* for 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions. Electron poor dipolarophiles such as alkenes and alkynes are typically employed in these reactions, and yield pyrrolidines and pyrrolines, respectively (Scheme 1.7).<sup>29</sup>



Scheme 1.7 Synthesis of Highly Functionalized Pyrrolidines and Pyrrolines from Azomethine Ylides

In addition to azomethine ylides, azomethine imines is another type of imine-based 1,3dipole.<sup>30</sup> A classic synthesis of these dipoles is via the condensation of aldehydes with 1,2disubstituted hydrazines (Scheme 1.8a).<sup>31</sup> Other routes to these 1,3-dipoles include the thermal ring-opening of diaziridines (Scheme 1.8b)<sup>32</sup> and the reaction of diazoalkanes with azo compounds (Scheme 1.8c).<sup>30</sup> These 1,3-dipoles readily undergo cycloaddition with alkenes and alkynes to give pyrazolidines and pyrazolines, respectively (Scheme 1.9)



Scheme 1.8 Synthesis of Azomethine Imines



Scheme 1.9 Synthesis of Pyrazolidines and Pyrazolines from Azomethine Imines

Nitrile oxides are another example of imine-based 1,3-dipole. Many methods have been developed to generate these 1,3-dipoles. The most common approach is the oxidation of oximes (Scheme 1.10).<sup>33</sup> These 1,3-dipoles commonly undergo cycloaddition with alkenes and alkynes to give isoxazolines and isoxazoles (Scheme 1.10).



Scheme 1.10 Synthesis of Isoxazolines and Isoxazoles from Cycloaddition of Nitrile Oxides with Alkenes and Alkynes

Our group has reported that Münchnones can be generated via the palladium-catalyzed multicomponent coupling of imines, acid chloride and carbon monoxide (Scheme 1.11).<sup>34</sup> When coupled with cycloaddition, this transformation can provide modular syntheses of nitrogen containing heterocycles from imines, acid chlorides and dipolarophile (Scheme 1.12).



Scheme 1.11 Paladium-Catalyzed Synthesis of Münchnones



Scheme 1.12 Synthesis of Nitrogen-Containing Heterocycles via Münchnone Cycloaddition

More recently, we have reported that Münchnone imines (Scheme 1.13), and a new class of 1,3-dipole: phospha-Münchnones (Scheme 1.14), can be generated from the coupling of imines with acid chlorides and either isonitriles or phosphonites.<sup>35</sup> These dipoles display similar reactivity to Münchnones, and provide non-palladium catalyzed routes to pyrroles from the same building blocks as above. Notably, the latter reaction with phospha-Münchnones is much more general than that with Münchnones, shows high regioselectivity, and uses stable, relatively inexpensive reagents.



Scheme 1.13 Synthesis of Münchnone Imines



Scheme 1.14 Synthesis of Phospha-Münchones

## **1.4 Imines as Dipolarophiles**

In addition to generating reactive dipoles, imines can also serve as dipolarophiles in 1,3dipolar cycloaddition reactions. A range of 1,3-dipoles have been reported to participate in cycloaddition reactions with imines. Examples of these are presented below.

#### 1.4.1 Azomethine Ylides Cycloaddition

Azomethine ylides undergo cycloaddition reactions with imines to generate imidazolidines. For example, azomethine ylides generated from tertiary amine N-oxide **1.15a** has been reported to react with unactivated imine dipolarophiles (Scheme 1.15).<sup>29a</sup> This transformation provides a route to imidazolidines **1.15b** in good yields and diastereoselectivity.



R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>= H, CH<sub>3</sub>, (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>

Scheme 1.15 Imidazolidine Synthesis Using Nonstabilized Azomethine Ylides

Azomethine ylides can also undergo diastereoselective 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions with imines. Viso *et al.* have reported that chiral sulfimines **1.16a** reacts with azomethine ylide **1.16b** with high diastereoselectivity, leading to the formation of 1,3-imidazolidine **1.16c** (Scheme 1.16).<sup>36</sup> The stereoselectivity in this reaction is rationalized based upon transition state **1.16d**, where the chelated iminoester enolate adds to the less sterically hindered face of the sulfinimine.



Scheme 1.16 Disastereoselective Synthesis of Imidazolidines via Chiral Sulfimine Cycloaddition

## **1.4.2** Azomethine Imines

Azomethine imines **1.17a** also undergo cycloaddition reactions with imines, in this case leading to the formation of triazole products. As shown in Scheme 1.17, electron-poor *N*-tosyl imine derived from **1.17a** reacts with various imines to generate substituted 1,2,4-triazolines **1.17b**. Treatment of the later with NBS results in 1,2,4-triazoles **1.17c** upon removal of the tosyl group.<sup>37</sup>



Scheme 1.17 1,2,4-Triazoline Synthesis

### 1.4.3 Diazomethane

Diazoalkanes are well-established carbene precursors.<sup>38</sup> However, these compounds are also 1,3-dipoles and can participate in cycloaddition reactions to form heterocycles.<sup>39</sup> For example, Kadaba *et al.* have reported that the reaction of diazomethane with substituted imines leads to the formation of 1,2,3-triazolines **1.18b** (Scheme 1.18).<sup>40</sup> This reaction is catalyzed by ethanol, and proceeds in moderate yields.

Scheme 1.18 1,2,3-Triazoline Synthesis via 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition of Azomethane and Imines

## 1.4.4 Carbonyl Ylides

Imines can also react with oxygen-containing 1,3-dipoles. For example, the addition of various imines to carbonyl ylides **1.19b** (Scheme 1.19), generated from the ring-opening of epoxides **1.19a**,<sup>41</sup> provides a route to prepare substituted oxazolidines **1.19c** in moderate yields.



Scheme 1.19 Carbonyl Dipoles in Oxazolidine Synthesis

### 1.4.5 Carbonyl Imines

Carbonyl imines **1.20b** are a less commonly employed 1,3-dipole. These have been reported to react with imines to form oxadiazolidines.<sup>42</sup> **1.20b** is generated in situ via the Lewis acid catalyzed rearrangement of oxaziridines (Scheme 1.20). The cycloaddition is forms **1.20c** with good diastereoselectivity.



Scheme 1.20 Stereoselective Synthesis of Oxadiazolidine

## 1.4.6 Nitrile Oxides

Imines have been reported to react with nitrile oxides to generate 1,2,4-oxadiazolines. An example of this is shown below with fluoro-substituted imines (Scheme 1.21).



Scheme 1.21 Synthesis of 1,2,4-Oxadiazolines

## 1.4.7 Carbon 1,3-Dipoles

All carbon 1,3-dipoles **1.22b** (Scheme 1.22), generated *in situ* from the reaction of allenes **1.22a** with phosphine catalysts, are effective in 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions with activated

imines. The reactivity is easily tuned by altering the phosphine source, and provides a route to generate substituted 3-pyrrolines **1.22c** in high yields.<sup>43</sup>



R= Ph, o-OMe-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>,p-OMe-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>,p-Cl-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>,p-NO<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>,1-napthyl, piperonyl, cinnamyl, 2-furyl, 2-methyl-4-pentenyl

Scheme 1.22 Cycloaddition of Carbon-Based 1,3-Dipoles with Imines

## 1.4.8 Münchnones

Münchnones have also been employed in 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions with imines. These dipoles are a special class of azomethine ylide, where the 1,3-dipole is integrated in an oxazolium heterocycle **1.23a** (Scheme 1.23). As with many 1,3-dipoles, Münchnones are usually prepared and used *in situ* in 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions. The most common method is through the dehydration of  $\alpha$ -amido acids (Scheme 1.23)



Scheme 1.23 Synthesis of Münchnones from Dehydration of α-Amido Acids

Münchnones were first reported to participate in 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions with imines by Consonni *et al.*<sup>44</sup> The reaction of **1.24b** (Scheme 1.24) with N-tosyl substituted imines leads to the rapid generation of an unstable bicyclic adduct **1.24c** that expels carbon dioxide, benzenesulfinic acid and aromatizes to form imidazoles.<sup>45</sup>



Scheme 1.24 Münchnone-Mediated Synthesis of Substituted Imidazoles

 $\alpha$ , $\beta$  unsaturated imines gives rise to a number of products when reacted with Münchnones. Since both the alkene and the imine can react with the 1,3-dipole, imidazoles **1.25c**, pyrrole **1.25d**, and open chain products **1.25e** are all obtained in this reaction (Scheme 1.25).<sup>46</sup>



Scheme 1.25 Cycloaddition Reactions of N-Phenylsulfonyl Unsaturated Imines

N-alkyl and N-aryl imines can also undergo cycloaddition with Münchnones. As Münchnones are electron rich dipoles, these reactions require acid catalysis, and it is postulated that the protonated imine is the reactive dipolarophile. Our lab reported that protonated imines undergo cycloaddition with in situ generated Münchnones to lead to the formation of imidazolium carboxylate salts (Scheme 1.26).<sup>47</sup>



Scheme 1.26 Palladium-Catalyzed Synthesis of Imidazolines

In a similar approach, Tepe has found that TMSCl addition to azlactones in the presence of imines leads to cycloaddition to form neutral imidazolines **1.27c** (Scheme 1.27).<sup>48</sup>



Scheme 1.27 Silicon Mediated 1,3-Dipolar Cycloaddition Reactions

Finally, our lab has reported that the palladium catalyzed multicomponent synthesis of Münchnones can be coupled with N-tosyl imine cycloaddition (Scheme 1.28). This provides a general route to imidazoles from three simple units: imines, acid chlorides and N-tosyl imines.



 $R^{1}$ = Et, *p*-OCH<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, Bn, hexyl R<sup>2</sup>=, *t*-Bu, Tol, *p*-CH<sub>3</sub>S-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub> R<sup>3</sup>= Ph, 2-furyl, 3-pyridine, cyclohexyl, pentyl

Scheme 1.28 Modular Catalytic Synthesis of Tetra-Substituted Imidazoles

## 1.5 Overview of Thesis

Due to the importance of nitrogen containing heterocycles in the fields of chemistry and biology, a range of synthetic methodologies have been developed to generate these products. As described above, one of the most convergent approaches is via 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions with imines. Notably, imines are readily available from amines and aldehydes (or ketones), making these building blocks both accessible and easily generalized.

One important class of heterocycles is imidazoles. As discussed in Section 1.4 (Scheme 1.24), imidazoles can be synthesized by the cycloaddition reaction of Münchnones with electron poor N-tosyl imines. This method is limited by the need to first generate the poly-substituted Münchnone dipole. Our lab has shown that this can be avoided by using palladium catalysis to assemble Münchnones from imines, acid chlorides and carbon monoxide (Scheme 1.28). However, the latter reaction shows limited scope, and typically only proceeds in high yields with aryl- or heteroaryl-substituted imines and acid chlorides.

As an alternative to Münchnones, the Arndtsen group has recently described a new class of 1,3-dipole: phospha-Münchnones (Section 1.3). These dipoles are easily prepared from imines, acid chlorides and phosphonites, and undergo cycloadditions with alkynes in a fashion similar to Münchnones. In light of this reactivity, we have undertaken a study of the potential utility of these dipoles in imidazole synthesis. Chapter 2 of this thesis describes the preparation of tetra-substituted imidazoles through 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions of electron deficient *N*-nosyl imines with phospha-Münchnones. The reactivity was further extended to nitrile-tethered imines, which undergo intramolecular cycloaddition to form polycyclic imidazoles.

In Chapter 3, we examine the cycloaddition of these phospha-Münchnones with alkenes. These studies were initiated by a PhD student in our group, Marie Morin. We show that the use of olefin-tethered imines in the generation of the phospha-Münchnones results in spontaneous alkene cycloaddition. This provides an efficient route to generate polycyclic 2-pyrrolines and pyrrolidines in one pot reactions from alkene-tethered imines and acid chlorides.

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#### **CHAPTER TWO**

# Synthesis of Highly Substituted and Fused-Ring Imidazoles via Phospha-Münchnone Cycloaddition

## **2.1 Introduction**

Imidazoles are an important general class of nitrogen containing heterocycle. These structures represent the core unit in a diverse range of pharmaceutical agents<sup>1</sup> and natural products,<sup>2</sup> including the angiotensin II inhibitor, olmesartan,<sup>3</sup> and the antitumor agent, clathridine A.<sup>4</sup> Imidazoles have also been incorporated into ionic liquids,<sup>5</sup> metal-coordinating ligands<sup>6</sup> and functional polymers.<sup>7</sup> Due to their importance, a variety of methods have been developed to construct these heterocycles.<sup>8</sup> However, only a few give access to tetra-substituted imidazoles. These include cyclocondensation reactions (Scheme 2.1),<sup>9</sup> hetero-cope rearrangements (Scheme 2.2),<sup>10</sup> or substitution reactions on pre-synthesized imidazoles (Scheme 2.3).<sup>11</sup> While effective, these methods typically require the non-trivial, multistep synthesis of the starting materials, generate waste, and/or suffer from the lack of regiocontrol.



Scheme 2.1 Cyclocondensation Approaches to Imidazoles



Scheme 2.2 Imidazole Synthesis via Hetero-Cope Rearrangement



Scheme 2.3 Substitution Reactions on Pre-Synthesized Imidazoles

A convergent approach to imidazoles is via the 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition of *N*-phenylsulfonyl-substituted imines with 1,3-oxazolium-5-oxides (Münchnones) (Scheme 2.4). This reaction was first reported by Consonni *et al*,<sup>12a</sup> and allows regioselective formation of

tetra-substituted imidazoles via cycloaddition followed by spontaneous  $CO_2$  and benzenesulfinic acid loss.<sup>13</sup> More recently, we have shown that Münchnones can be generated via the palladiumcatalyzed coupling of imines, acid chlorides and carbon monoxide,<sup>14</sup> which, when coupled with *N*-tosyl imine cycloaddition, provides an efficient synthesis of imidazoles from imines, acid chlorides and *N*-tosyl imines (Scheme 2.5).<sup>15</sup> A challenge with these cycloaddition approaches is the scope of products readily available, as palladium catalysis typically requires the use of stable C-aryl substituted imines, and more traditional approaches to Münchnones involve the initial multistep build up of an  $\alpha$ -amido acid precursor.<sup>16</sup> In addition, both of these cycloaddition reactions require the use of sensitive *N*-tosyl imines.



Scheme 2.4 Münchnone-Mediated Synthesis of Imidazoles



Scheme 2.5 Palladium-Catalyzed, Multicomponent Synthesis of Imidazoles

We have recently reported a new type of dipole that suggests an alternative to the above methods, phospha-Münchnones **2.1** (Scheme 2.6). The latter is readily prepared from imines, acid chlorides and catechyl-substituted phosphonites, and undergoes cycloaddition with alkynes and alkenes in a direct analogy to Münchnones.<sup>17</sup> In light of the facile generation of **2.1**, we became interested in the use of these substrates in cycloadditions to generate imidazoles. As described below, this can allow the mild, regioselective and general synthesis of tetra-substituted imidazoles. In addition, the high reactivity of these dipoles has opened the potential of replacing

N-tosyl imines with nitriles, providing a novel synthesis of polycyclic imidazole products from nitrile-tethered imines and acid chlorides.



Scheme 2.6 Modular Design of Phosphorus Based 1,3-Dipole

## 2.2 Results and Discussion

## 2.2.1 Imine Cycloaddition with Phospha-Münchnone

Our initial work probed the reaction of phospha-Münchnone **2.1a** with *N*-tosyl benzaldimine. As shown in Scheme 2.7, the *in situ* formation of **2.1a** from imine **2.2a**, acid chloride **2.3a** and PhP(2-catechyl) followed by the addition of *N*-tosyl imine **2.4a** leads to the complete consumption of the dipole over the course of 2 h, and the formation of imidazole **2.5a**.<sup>12b</sup> However, the yield of **2.5a** is very low (20%). In situ <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P NMR analysis of the reaction mixture show that the dipole has decomposed to a number of unidentifiable side products, together with the near quantitative formation of phosphine oxide. Control experiments suggest that the toluene sulfinate leaving group generated as a byproduct of imidazole formation is non-innocent in this reaction. The addition of sodium *p*-toluene sulfinate to phospha-Münchnone **2.1a** results in the rapid decomposition of the 1,3-dipole within 1 h, at ambient temperature (Scheme 2.8), generating a complex mixture of products.<sup>18</sup>


Scheme 2.8 Control Experiment of Phospha-Münchnone and p-Toluene Sulfinate

In an attempt to improve the efficiency of this reaction, both the imine dipolarophile and phosphine used in the reaction were optimized (Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Firstly, since the arylsulfonyl unit on the imine is lost upon cycloaddition, we probed the potential of other *N*-substituted imines to increase the yield of this reaction. As shown in Table 2.1, a number of other electron deficient imines can undergo cycloaddition with *in situ* generated **2.1a**. **2.1a** reacts most efficiently with electron poor dipolarophiles. Thus, the more electron rich *N*-Boc substituted imine does not react with **2.1a**, while the use of the *p*-chloroaryl sulfonyl imine leads to a slight increase in yield (entry 3) Moving to the even more electron deficient *N*-nosyl imine leads to the formation of **2.5a** in a useful 65% yield (entry 4). More electron poor *N*-SO<sub>2</sub>Cl substituted imine does not further increase the reaction yield, and only 10% (entry 5) of the imidazole was formed, together with decomposition of the dipole.



**Table 2.1** Screening of Electron Deficient Imines<sup>a</sup>

Various phosphorus sources were also examined in this reaction. Consistent with previous reports, trialkyl phosphines do not mediate cycloaddition presumably due to the electron rich phosphine that does not cyclize to form the 1,3-dipole (Table 2.2, entry 1). Triphenylphosphite (entry 3) and tris(trifluoroethyl)phosphite (entry 2) do mediate the formation of imidazole, but in moderate yield. Amido-substituted Horner-Wadsworth-Emmons reagents have been previously reported to be precursors to 1,3-dipoles in the presence of TMSCl.<sup>19</sup> As

shown in entries 4 and 5, the generation of these dipoles from imines, acid chloride and phosphite does result in cycloaddition with N-nosyl imine, but in lower yields. Overall, these studies suggest that PhP(2-catechyl) in concert with N-nosyl imine provides the most efficient system for cycloaddition to form imidazole in good yield, at ambient temperature and without the use of any additives.



**Table 2.2** Development of Phosphine Mediated Synthesis of Imidazoles<sup>*a*</sup>

<sup>*a*</sup> Table 2.1 procedure <sup>*b*</sup> Added at -78°C. <sup>*c*</sup> (0.2 mmol TMSCl)

### 2.2.2 Scope of Substituted Imidazoles

With the optimized reaction conditions, we turned our attention to the substrate scope. A useful feature of the phosphorus-based 1,3-dipole **2.1** is its modular formation from PhP(2-catechyl), imines, and acid chlorides. Thus, it is straightforward to tune any of the three dipole substituents. This is illustrated in Table 2.3. The reaction proceeds with various *C*-aryl and *C*-heteroaryl substituted imines, as well as those with *N*-alkyl, *N*-benzyl or *N*-aryl substituents. Similarly, a variety of acid chlorides can be employed. These include not only substituted

benzoyl chloride, but also heteroaryl (entries 2 and 7) and alkyl acid chlorides (entry 4). The *N*-nosyl substituted imine can also be modulated with a range of aryl and heteroaryl substituents. However, aliphatic *N*-nosyl imines do not undergo cycloaddition, but instead leads to decomposition of the dipole (entry 10). Overall, this reaction can allow the buildup of a range of substituted imidazoles from two imines, and acid chloride, where each of the four substituents can be systematically modulated with perfect regiocontrol.

Entry	Imine	Imine Acid Chloride Imine		Product	
1		C	N <sup>N</sup> <sup>S</sup> O <sup>NO2</sup>	(%  yield)	
2			N <sup>N</sup> <sup>S</sup> O <sup>NO<sub>2</sub></sup>		
3	N S	CI	N <sup>O</sup> 2 N <sup>O</sup> 2	36% 5c N S N 77% 5d	
4	N CI	Ç,			
5	Br	CI	NO2 NSO	Br N 50% 50 50	
6	N S	CI	F NO2	S N H 63% 5g F	

 Table 2.3 Scope of Tetra-Substituted Imidazole



## 2.2.3 Synthesis of Polycyclic Imidazoles

With the synthesis of polysubstituted imidazoles in hand, we next turned our attention to a potentially more atom economical approach to these products: nitrile cycloaddition. Nitriles are readily available and stable units, and would obviate the need to generate *N*-tosyl imines. In addition, their cycloaddition leads to no waste from the C=N fragment. Unfortunately, nitriles are also poor cycloaddition substrates with Münchnones. Previous results have shown that only electron poor nitriles (e.g. ethyl cyanoformate) are sufficiently reactive to cycloadd to Münchnones, and do so in low yield.<sup>20</sup> As an alternative, since the phospha-Münchnone is generated from imines and acid chlorides, we postulated that it should be straightforward to incorporate simple, unactivated nitriles into **2.1** from nitrile-tethered imines. This would allow a more favorable intramolecular cycloaddition reaction to assemble polycyclic imidazoles.

Nitrile-linked imines are easily generated from aldehyde precursors. For example, imine **2.6a** can be generated from salicylaldehyde and bromoacetonitrile, followed by condensation

with ethylamine.<sup>21</sup> The reaction of **2.6a** with *p*-toluoyl chloride and PhP(2-catechyl) in CDCl<sub>3</sub> followed by the addition of DBU leads to a spontaneous cycloaddition of **2.1b** to generate polycyclic imidazole **2.7a** (Scheme 2.7) in 76% isolated yield.



Scheme 2.9 Phosphorus Mediated Intramolecular Cycloaddition Reaction

Similar to that shown in Section 2.2.2, this reaction is also easily generalized. A number of imines can be used in this imidazole synthesis (Table 2.4), including aryl- (entries 5 and 6), napthyl- (entry 7) and pyrrole-based (entries 8 and 9) imines. The nitrile tether can be also varied, with oxygen- or nitrogen-tethered nitriles generating imidazole in good yields (entries 1, 8), while 6,6-, 6,5- and 5,5-fused ring products can be formed at equal ease (entries 7-9).<sup>22</sup>

The acid chloride can similarly be modulated in this transformation. Various aryl-, heteroaryl- (entries 2, 5), and even alkyl- (entry 6) substituted acid chlorides lead to imidazoles in high yields. In addition, this chemistry can be expanded beyond acid chlorides. Chloroformates and chlorothioformates are also established to react with imines to form iminium salts. The use of the latter in this reaction provides efficient access to 2-thioalkyl (entry 4) and 2-phenoxy- (entry 3) substituted products in moderate to good yield. Overall, considering the availability of these substrates, this reaction provides a very efficient approach to prepare polycyclic imidazoles, where these products can be assembled in one pot, from nitrile-tethered imines and acid chlorides and with good substrate diversity.

Entry	Substrate	Acid Chloride	Product (% yield)
1		F CI	С О 2.7b 68%
2		CI	N 0-2.7c 74%
3		∽s <sup>O</sup> CI	N S 0-2.7d 47%
4		O CI	N 0 2.7e 51%
5	Br, H O	CI CI	Br N N 2.7f 79%
6		CI	0 0 2.7g 77%
7	N H O N	o I I	N N N N N N N N N N N N N N
8 <sup><i>b</i></sup>		CI	N N 2.7i 63%
9 <sup><i>b</i></sup>	H N N	CI	N N 2.7j 59%

 Table 2.4 Scope of Polycyclic Imidazoles

## **2.3 Conclusions**

In conclusion, phospha-Münchnones have been found to participate in 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reaction electron deficient imines and tethered nitriles to generate imidazoles. These reactions are modular, easily generalized, and allow access to highly substituted or polycyclic imidazoles in one pot from available substrates. These represent new multicomponent routes to polysubstituted imidazoles.

# 2.4 Experimental

# **2.4.1 General Procedures**

All reactions were performed in a Vacuum Atmospheres 553-2 dry box. All reagents were purchased from commercial sources and used as received. PCy<sub>3</sub> was dried by heating at 120°C under high vacuum. Liquid P(OCH<sub>2</sub>CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub> and P(OPh)<sub>3</sub> were dried over 4Å molecular sieves. PhP(2-catechyl),<sup>22</sup> (catechyl)POTMS<sup>19</sup> and aldehyde precursors to imines<sup>23</sup> were prepared as described in the literature. Deuterated CDCl<sub>3</sub> was distilled from CaH<sub>2</sub> under nitrogen. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded on Varian Mercury 300 and 400 MHz instruments. HRMS were obtained from the McGill University mass spectra facilities.

# 2.4.2 Typical Nitrile-Tethered Imine Synthesis

2-(2-formylphenoxy)acetonitrile was prepared in anology to literature reports<sup>21.</sup> To salicylaldehyde (500 mg, 4.09 mmol) in DMF (15mL), was added K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (848 mg, 6.15 mmol and stirred at room temperature for 15 min. Bromoacetonitrile (0.589 mg, 4.92 mmol) was added and stirred at room temperature for 18h. Reaction mixture was filtered, diluted with EtOAc (100mL), washed with water (3x100mL), brine (2x10mL) and dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. The solvent was evaporated and the crude residue was purified by column chromatography with a solvent gradient of EtOAc/Hexanes 0-40% to give 2-(2-formylphenoxy)acetonitrile, as pale yellow solid (84%). To a solution of 2-(2-formylphenoxy)acetonitrile (500 mg, 3.1 mmol) in dichloromethane (15 mL) was added MgSO<sub>4</sub> and ethyl amine (2.0 M in THF, 1.7 mL, 3.41 mmol). The heterogeneous mixture was stirred at room temperature for 18h. The reaction mixture was filtered, and the solvent and excess amine was evaporated *in vacuo* to provide imine **2.6a** as a dark orange oil in quantitative yield.

# 2.4.3 Spectroscopic Data

(E)-2-(2-((ethylimino)methyl)phenoxy)acetonitrile

(E)-2-(4-bromo-2-((ethylimino)methyl)phenoxy)acetonitrile

## (E)-2-((1-((ethylimino)methyl)naphthalen-2-yl)oxy)acetonitrile

<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  9.09 – 8.81 (m, 1H), 7.93 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.82 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.57 (ddd, J = 8.5, 6.8, 1.4 Hz, 1H), 7.45 (ddd, J = 8.1, 6.8, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.35 – 7.20 (m, 1H), 4.92 (s, 1H), 3.81 (qd, J = 7.3, 1.4 Hz, 1H), 1.43 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H). <sup>13</sup>**C** NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  156.70, 154.22, 132.34, 131.96, 128 22 128 19 125 70 125 29 120 78 114 31 77 43 77 00 76 58 57 42 55 75 16 63

130.56, 128.22, 128.19, 125.70, 125.29, 120.78, 114.31, 77.43, 77.00, 76.58, 57.42, 55.75, 16.63. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{15}H_{15}N_2O^+$ ; calculated: 239.1179, found: 239.1175.

## (E)-2-(2-((ethylimino)methyl)-6-methoxyphenoxy)acetonitrile



<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.68 (s, 116H), 7.57 (dd, J = 7.9, 1.4 Hz, 118H), 7.16 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 125H), 6.99 (dd, J = 8.2, 1.4 Hz, 126H), 4.87 (s, 1H), 3.90 (s, 13H), 3.69 (qd, J = 7.3, 1.3 Hz, 240H), 1.31 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 372H).<sup>13</sup>**C** NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  155.50, 151.82, 130.46, 125.69, 119.21, 115.50, 114.04, 57.70, 56.24, 55.87, 16.17. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>; calculated: 219.1128, found:

219.1122.

(E)-2-(2-((ethylimino)methyl)-1H-pyrrol-1-yl)acetonitrile

<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.13 (s, 1H), 6.82 (s, 1H), 6.45 (dd, J = 3.8, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 6.23 (dd, J = 3.7, 2.9 Hz, 1H), 5.57 (s, 2H), 3.53 (q, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 1.26 (t, J= 7.3 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>**C** NMR (75 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN)  $\delta$  151.62, 127.23, 125.01, 117.31, 109.60, 55.47, 36.74, 15.98. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>12</sub>N<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>; calculated: 162.1026, found: 162.1026

(E)-3-(2-((ethylimino)methyl)-1H-pyrrol-1-yl)propanenitrile



## Reaction of 2.2a with NaO<sub>2</sub>STol

In a glovebox, imine **2.2a** (0.2 mmol) and acid chloride **2.2b** (0.22 mmol) were mixed in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (ca. 0.5 mL) and allowed to stand at room temperature for 30 min. PhP(2-catechyl) (0.22 mmol) was added, and after 30 min DBU (0.6 mmol) was added as a solution in CDCl<sub>3</sub>, followed by addition of sodium *p*-toluene sulfinate as a suspension in CDCl<sub>3</sub>. Reaction color changed from a deep red to a pale yellow within 1h. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P NMR showed decomposition of the dipole. The presence of H<sub>2</sub>O decomposes the 1,3-dipole within minutes to the hydrolyzed phospha-Müchnone, PhP(2-catechyl)CH(Tol)N(Bn)COPh (Laure Kayser's unpublished results)

## 2.4.4 Synthesis of Tetra-Substituted Imidazoles 2.5

In a glovebox, imine (0.2 mmol) and acid chloride (0.22 mmol) were mixed in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (ca. 0.5 mL) and allowed to stand at room temperature for 30 min. PhP(2-catechyl) (0.22 mmol) was added, and after 30 min DBU (0.6 mmol) was added as a solution in CDCl<sub>3</sub>, followed by the addition of *N*-nosyl substituted imine (0.3 mmol). The reaction was complete within 3h. The crude solution was concentrated in vacuo and purified by column chromatography on a 4g column of Silica Gel 60 using a ethyl acetate:hexanes gradient (0-40%) on a Combi-Flash system, giving pure product as an off-white powder.

## <u>1-benzyl-2-(4-methoxyphenyl)-4-phenyl-5-(*p*-tolyl)-1*H*-imidazole (**2.5a**)</u>



Isolated yield: 65%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.58 (t, J = 9.3 Hz, 4H), 7.26 – 7.23 (m, 5H), 7.17 – 7.04 (m, 5H), 6.90 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 2H), 6.83 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 2H), 5.07 (s, 2H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 2.36 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  160.10, 147.74, 138.47, 137.71, 130.88, 130.42, 129.84, 129.53, 128.58, 128.04, 127.84, 127.29, 126.75, 126.27, 125.94, 113.98, 55.30, 48.12, 21.37. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>27</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sup>+</sup>;

calculated: 206.09980, found: 206.09928.

## 1-benzyl-2-(4-fluorophenyl)-4-phenyl-5-(p-tolyl)-1H-imidazole(2.5b)



Isolated yield: 41%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.62 – 7.57 (m, 4H), 7.23 – 7.20 (m, 5H), 7.14 – 7.04 (m, 7H), 6.82 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 2H), 5.06 (s, 2H), 2.37 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  131.07, 130.96, 130.84, 130.22, 129.63, 128.68, 128.11, 127.47, 126.76, 126.51, 125.85, 115.81, 115.52,48.14, 21.38.HRMS (ESI+) for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>24</sub>N<sub>2</sub>F+; calculated: 419.19180, found: 419.19102.

## 1-benzyl-2-(furan-2-yl)-4-phenyl-5-(p-tolyl)-1H-imidazole (2.5c)



Isolated yield: 36%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.57 (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.46 (d, J = 1.0 Hz, 1H), 7.28 – 7.18 (m, 6H), 7.15 (dd, J = 7.4, 4.8 Hz, 3H), 7.09 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 6.92 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 6.72 (s, 1H), 6.43 (dd, J = 3.4, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 5.25 (s, 2H), 2.38 (s, 3H).<sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  142.85, 138.83, 137.33, 130.88, 130.37, 129.65, 128.64, 128.04, 127.34, 126.92, 126.54, 125.92, 111.46, 48.27, 21.39. HRMS (ESI+) for

C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>23</sub>ON<sub>2</sub>+; calculated: 391.18049, found: 391.17957.

## <u>1-ethyl-2,4-diphenyl-5-(thiophen-2-yl)-1*H*-imidazole (**2.5d**)</u>



Isolated yield: 77%.<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.70 (dd, J = 7.9, 1.5 Hz, 2H), 7.65 – 7.57 (m, 2H), 7.54 (dd, J = 4.8, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.53 – 7.42 (m, 3H), 7.26 – 7.22 (m, 2H), 7.19 – 7.14 (m, 3H), 3.99 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.15 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H).<sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  148.09, 131.39, 130.44, 129.12, 129.06, 128.65, 128.52, 128.09, 127.69, 126.82, 126.65, 126.33, 124.44, 121.14, 39.80, 16.60. **HRMS** (ESI+) for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>19</sub>N<sub>2</sub>S+; calculated: 331.12635,

found: 331.12554.

### 1-benzyl-5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4-(furan-2-yl)-2-isopropyl-1*H*-imidazole (2.5e)



Isolated yield: 45%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.33 (d, J = 2.7 Hz, 2H), 7.30 – 7.24 (m, 5H), 7.17 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d, J = 7.0 Hz, 2H), 6.28 (s, 1H), 6.06 (d, J = 3.0 Hz, 1H), 4.97 (s, 2H), 1.34 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 6H).<sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  154.13, 149.47, 141.07, 136.96, 134.68, 132.19, 130.21, 128.88, 128.85, 128.74, 127.64, 126.80, 125.53, 110.73, 105.10, 46.73, 26.65, 21.76. HRMS (ESI+) for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>22</sub>ON<sub>2</sub>Cl+; calculated: 377.14152, found:

377.14112.

## 5-(3-bromophenyl)-1-methyl-4-phenyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1H-imidazole (2.5f)



Isolated yield: 50%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.68 – 7.50 (m, 6H), 7.36 – 7.27 (m, 4H), 7.27 – 7.13 (m, 3H), 3.50 (s, 3H), 2.42 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  148.43, 138.86, 138.16, 134.30, 133.47, 131.58, 130.53, 129.67, 129.29, 128.95, 128.57, 128.16, 127.80, 127.02, 126.54, 124.44, 122.86, 33.23, 21.40. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>20</sub>N<sub>2</sub>Br <sup>+</sup>; calculated:

# 403.08044, found: 403.08010.

## <u>1-benzyl-4-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-(4-(methylthio)phenyl)-2-(p-tolyl)-1H-imidazole (2.5g)</u>



Isolated yield: 63%. <sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub> 7.61 – 7.47 (m, 4H), 7.29 – 7.12 (m, 7H), 7.08 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 6.90 (t, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.85 – 6.78 (m, 2H), 5.08 (s, 2H), 2.48 (s, 3H), 2.36 (s, 3H).**HRMS** (ESI+) for C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>26</sub>N<sub>2</sub>FS+; calculated: 465.17952, found: 465.17798.

## 1-benzyl-5-phenyl-2-(thiophen-2-yl)-4-(p-tolyl)-1H-imidazole (2.5h)



Isolated yield: 62%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.45 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.39 – 7.15 (m, 10H), 7.12 (d, J = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 7.07 – 6.89 (m, 4H), 5.19 (s, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  141.93, 138.34, 137.29, 136.09, 131.30, 130.98, 130.69, 130.08, 128.81, 128.79, 128.69, 127.43, 127.41, 126.85, 126.76, 126.35, 126.09, 125.76, 124.44, 48.22, 21.16. HRMS (ESI+) for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>23</sub>N<sub>2</sub>S+; calculated: 407.1576, found: 407.1587.

## 4-(furan-2-yl)-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-5-phenyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1H-imidazole (2.5i)



Isolated yield: 68%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.37 (d, J = 0.9 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.29 – 7.24 (m, 3H), 7.20 (dt, J = 7.5, 3.7 Hz, 2H), 7.05 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.96 – 6.91 (m, 2H), 6.78 – 6.72 (m, 2H), 6.33 (dd, J = 3.3, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 6.27 (s, 1H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 2.30 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  159.08, 149.41, 147.53, 141.26, 138.19, 131.02, 130.64, 129.92, 129.67, 129.32, 128.82, 128.75, 128.05, 128.02, 127.37, 114.21, 110.81, 105.70, 55.34, 21.29.HRMS (ESI+) for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>23</sub>O<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>+;

calculated: 407.17540, found: 407.17426.

## 5-(benzo[d][1,3]dioxol-5-yl)-1-benzyl-2-phenyl-4-(p-tolyl)-1H-imidazole (2.5j)



Isolated yield: 35%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.64 - 7.63 (m, 2H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.41 - 7.36 (m, 3H), 7.28 - 7.15 (m, 3H), 7.05 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.84 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 6.75 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 6.72 - 6.67 (m, 1H), 6.64 (d, *J* = 1.4 Hz, 1H), 5.97 (s, 2H), 5.10 (s, 2H), 2.30 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  147.86, 147.82, 147.75, 138.12, 137.63, 135.93, 131.55, 130.97, 129.07, 129.02, 128.82, 128.59, 128.56, 127.36, 126.60, 125.97, 125.12, 124.43, 111.28, 108.67, 101.25, 48.16, 21.18. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>25</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>; calculated: 445.19105, found: 445.18969.

## 2.4.5 Synthesis of Polycyclic Imidazoles 2.7

In a glovebox, imine (0.2 mmol) and acid chloride (0.22 mmol) were mixed in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (0.5 mL) and allowed to stand at room temperature for 30 min. PhP(2-catechyl) (0.22 mmol) was added, and after 30 min DBU (0.6 mmol) was added as a solution in CDCl<sub>3</sub>. The reaction was complete within 5 min. The crude solution was concentrated in vacuo and purified by column chromatography on a 4g column of Silica Gel 60 using a ethyl acetate:hexanes gradient (0-40%) on a Combi-Flash system giving pure product as a pale yellow powder.

## 1-ethyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,4-dihydrochromeno[3,4-d]imidazole (2.7a)

Isolated yield: 76%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  6.42 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.30 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 6.22 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 6.12 – 6.00 (m, 1H), 5.94 – 5.90 (m, 2H), 4.30 (s, 2H), 3.22 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.36 (s, 3H), 0.39 (t, J =7.2 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  152.94, 149.51, 139.11, 134.21, 129.36, 128.97, 127.54, 127.45, 122.16, 121.74, 119.68, 117.95, 117.41, 66.38, 40.74, 21.37, 16.36. HRMS (ESI+) for C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>19</sub>ON<sub>2</sub>+; calculated: 291.14919, found: 291.14903.

## 1-ethyl-2-(4-fluorophenyl)-1,4-dihydrochromeno[3,4-d]imidazole (2.7b)



Isolated yield: 68%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.62 – 7.52 (m, 2H), 7.46 – 7.32 (m, 1H), 7.26 – 7.13 (m, 3H), 7.05 – 6.95 (m, 2H), 6.80 – 6.65 (m, 3H), 5.33 (s, 2H), 4.28 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.47 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  164.89, 161.58, 152.99, 148.27, 144.72, 134.06,

131.13, 131.01, 127.76, 126.42, 122.46, 121.83, 120.12, 119.77, 117.66, 117.54, 116.02, 115.73, 114.98, 66.14, 40.81, 16.34. **HRMS** (ESI+) for  $C_{18}H_{16}ON_2F$ +; calculated: 295.12412, found: 295.12322.

## <u>1-ethyl-2-(furan-2-yl)-1,4-dihydrochromeno[3,4-*d*]imidazole (2.7c)</u>

Isolated yield: 74%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.53 (dd, J = 1.8, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 7.41 – 7.33 (m, 1H), 7.19 – 7.08 (m, 1H), 7.03 - 6.94 (m, 2H), 6.89 (dd, J = 3.5, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.54 (dd, J = 3.5, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 5.31 (s, 2H), 4.49 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.59 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  153.15,

145.27, 142.93, 140.04, 134.44, 127.85, 122.63, 121.89, 119.83, 117.58, 115.01, 111.73, 110.16, 66.06, 41.19, 16.19. **HRMS** (ESI+) for  $C_{16}H_{15}O_2N_2+$ ; calculated: 296.11280, found: 267.11204.

## <u>1-ethyl-2-(ethylthio)-1,4-dihydrochromeno[3,4-*d*]imidazole (2.7d)</u>

Isolated yield: 47%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.40 – 7.19 (m, 1H), 7.17 – 7.04 (m, 1H), 6.99 – 6.92 (m, 2H), 5.29 (s, 2H), 4.30 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 3.11 (q, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H), 1.47 – 1.32 (m, 6H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  152.69, 143.16, 134.70, 127.55, 122.83, 121.77, 119.43, 117.61, 117.43, 66.31, 40.68, 28.96, 15.76, 15.08. HRMS (ESI+) for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>17</sub>ON<sub>2</sub>S+; calculated: 261.10561, found: 261.10477.

## 1-ethyl-2-phenoxy-1,4-dihydrochromeno[3,4-d]imidazole (2.7e)

Isolated yield: 51%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.42 - 7.36 (m, 2H), 7.29 - 7.14 (m, 4H), 7.14 - 7.04 (m, 1H), 6.99 - 6.93 (m, 2H), 5.24 (s, 2H), 4.22 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.48 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  154.86, 152.49, 151.19, 129.81, 128.76, 127.00, 124.75, 121.69, 118.75, 118.71, 117.22 (6.11, 22.96), 157.72 HZ, 2H) (5.11, 20.96), 157.72 HZ, 2H) (5.11, 20.96), 157.74 Hz, 2H) (5.11, 2H

117.97, 117.69, 117.22, 66.11, 38.88, 15.73. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{18}H_{17}N_2O_2^{-+}$ ; calculated: 293.12845, found: 293.12827.

## 8-bromo-1-ethyl-2-(thiophen-2-yl)-1,4-dihydrochromeno[3,4-d]imidazole (2.7f)



Isolated yield: 79%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.46 (d, J = 5.4 Hz, 1H), 7.44 (d, J = 2.2 Hz, 1H), 7.42 – 7.38 (m, 1H), 7.22 (dd, J = 8.6, 2.2 Hz, 1H), 7.19 – 7.13 (m, 1H), 6.87 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 5.35 (s, 2H), 4.42 (q, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 1.61 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  152.02, 143.70,

135.16, 131.96, 130.16, 127.71, 127.42, 126.28, 122.14, 121.88, 119.36, 119.11, 114.06, 66.29, 40.88, 16.15. **HRMS** (ESI+) for  $C_{16}H_{14}ON_2BrS+$ ; calculated: 361.00047, found: 361.00023.

## 1-ethyl-2-isopropyl-6-methoxy-1,4-dihydrochromeno[3,4-d]imidazole (2.7g)



Isolated yield: 77%. <sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  6.96 – 6.89 (m, 2H), 6.82 – 6.66 (m, 1H), 5.35 (s, 2H), 4.16 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 3.01 (dq, J = 13.6, 6.8 Hz, 1H), 1.42 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.34 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  154.43, 149.03, 141.35, 132.94, 121.50, 120.58, 118.89,

111.94, 110.32, 66.87, 56.02, 39.22, 25.90, 22.11, 16.35. **HRMS** (ESI+) for  $C_{16}H_{21}O_2N_2+$ ; calculated: 273.15975, found: 273.15885.

## 1-ethyl-2-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1,4-dihydrobenzo[5,6]chromeno[3,4-d]imidazole (2.7h)



Isolated yield: 82%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.05 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.82 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.70 (t, J = 8.1 Hz, 3H), 7.53 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.40 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.30 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.03 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 5.24 (s, 2H), 4.38 (q, J = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 3.88 (s, 3H), 0.66 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 2H)

3H).<sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  160.19, 152.62, 152.20, 135.73, 130.15, 130.13, 128.64, 128.32, 127.72, 126.14, 125.11, 124.73, 124.01, 123.61, 118.74, 114.19, 112.69, 66.59, 55.37, 43.54, 15.25.**HRMS** (ESI+) for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>21</sub>O<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>+; calculated: 357.15975, found: 357.15891.

1-ethyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,4-dihydroimidazo[4,5-a]pyrrolizine (2.7i)

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.50 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.27 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 6.95 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.30 – 6.21 (m, 1H), 6.01 (d, J = 3.1 Hz, 1H), 4.74 (s, 2H), 4.19 (q, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 2.41 (s, 3H), 1.54 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  149.07, 144.85, 138.53, 130.33, 129.35,

129.18, 128.41, 127.95, 117.96, 110.43, 95.65, 47.05, 41.58, 21.34, 15.83. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{17}H_{18}N_3^+$ ; calculated: 264.14952, found: 264.14953.

## 1-ethyl-2-(p-tolyl)-4,5-dihydro-1H-imidazo[4,5-g]indolizine (2.7k)

Isolated yield: 63%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.53 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.28 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.86 – 6.64 (m, 1H), 6.29 – 6.16 (m, 2H), 4.29 – 4.11 (m, 4H), 3.15 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 2H), 2.42 (s, 3H), 1.48 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  146.45, 145.02, 138.67, 129.32, 128.59, 123.33,

121.14, 119.88, 114.98, 108.12, 101.34, 45.67, 40.45, 24.20, 21.34, 15.94.**HRMS** (ESI+) for  $C_{18}H_{20}N_2$ +; calculated: 278.1652, found: 278.1641.

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### **CHAPTER THREE**

## Synthesis of Polycyclic 2-Pyrrolines via Phospha-Münchnone Cycloaddition

#### **3.1 Introduction**

2-pyrrolines are important heterocyclic motifs in a variety of natural and synthetic products of biological importance.<sup>1</sup> Examples of these include Spirotryprostatin B **1.1** (Figure 3.1),<sup>2</sup> insecticides  $(1.2)^3$  and anticancer agents (1.3).<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, these heterocycles can be used as intermediates in the synthesis of pyrrolidines (via reduction)<sup>5</sup> or pyrroles (via oxidation).<sup>1a,6</sup>



Figure 3.1 Structure of Natural and Biologically Active 2-Pyrrolines

While a range of methods have been developed to synthesize 2-pyrrolines (e.g. hydroamination reactions,<sup>7</sup> cyclizations,<sup>4,8</sup> ring-closing metathesis,<sup>9</sup> isomerization of 3,4-dihydropyrroles,<sup>10</sup> and others<sup>11</sup>), one of the most convergent is the 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition of alkenes and Münchnones. This transformation was first noted by Huisgen *et al.* in 1964,<sup>12</sup> and has since been used in the preparation of a range of 2-pyrroline derivatives.<sup>13</sup> While effective, a major limitation of this approach is the need to first synthesize the Münchnone. The latter can require multiple steps, especially for highly substituted products, generates significant waste, and limits the overall efficiency of these syntheses.

As discussed in Chapter 2, we have recently reported in our laboratory a new class of 1,3dipole, phospha-Münchnone **3.1** (Scheme 3.1). This dipole can be easily generated in one pot from imines, acid chlorides and phosphorus reagents, and undergoes cycloaddition reactions in direct analogy to Münchnones. This includes alkyne cycloaddition to synthesize pyrroles,<sup>14</sup> and as described in Chapter 2, cycloaddition with N-nosyl imines or tethered nitriles to form imidazoles.



Scheme 3.1 Assembly of Phospha-Münchnone

Considering the accessibility of phospha-Münchnone **3.1**, we were interested in applying these dipoles to the synthesis of 2-pyrrolines. Initial studies by Marie Morin, a PhD student in our group, demonstrated that the intramolecular cycloaddition of tethered alkenes can occur, and provides an overall synthesis of polycyclic 2-pyrrolines (Table 3.1). The reactivity of phospha-Münchnone **3.1** is highly dependent on the electronic nature of the phosphorus reagent. Thus, the reaction of the imine, acid chloride and triphenylphosphine followed by deprotonation forms the acyclic phosphorus ylide **3.1**', which under no explored conditions undergo 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition (entry 1).<sup>14</sup> The cycloaddition is presumably inhibited due to the electron-rich phosphine preventing chelation with the carbonyl oxygen to form the 1,3-dipole **3.1**. Similar results were observed PCy<sub>3</sub> and P(NMe<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>. More electron poor phosphites slowly form the fused cyclic pyrroline at moderate yield (entries 4 and 5). The addition of TMSOTf increases reaction yield, while decreasing the reaction time, presumably by favoring the equilibrium formation of the ionic N-acyliminium salt (Scheme 1, X = OTf), which is more susceptible to nucleophilic attack of the phosphite (entries 6, 7). In contrast, the moderately electron rich phosphonite PhP(2-catechyl) is sufficiently nucleophilic to react with the iminium salt without additives, yet

it can still accept chelation of the oxygen from the former acid chloride to form **3.1**, and allows the high yield formation of pyrroline within 2 h at ambient temperature.

	N <sup>∠Et</sup> ↓ O + ↓ P-Tol	CI base solvent	→		p-Tol
	3.2a			3.3a	a
Entry	PR <sub>3</sub>	Base	Additive	Time	Yield <sup>b</sup>
1	PPh <sub>3</sub>	LiHMDS <sup>c</sup>	/		0%
2	PCy <sub>3</sub>	LiHMDS <sup>c</sup>	/		0%
3	$P(NMe_2)_3$	LiHMDS <sup>c</sup>	/		0%
4	(PhO) <sub>3</sub> P	DBU	/	24h	46%
5	$(CF_3CH_2O)_3P$	DBU	/	10h	46%
6	(PhO) <sub>3</sub> P	DBU	TMSOTf	5h	80%
7	$(CF_3CH_2O)_3P$	DBU	TMSOTf	2h	67%
8	PhP(2-catechyl)	Et( <sup>i</sup> Pr) <sub>2</sub> N	/	6h <sup>d</sup>	36%
9	PhP(2-catechyl)	Et <sub>3</sub> N	/	6h <sup>d</sup>	66%
10	PhP(2-catechyl)	DBU	/	2h	85%

Table 3.1. Development of PR<sub>3</sub> Mediated Pyrroline Synthesis

<sup>a</sup> Procedure: Imine (0.2 mmol), acid chloride (0.22 mmol), 0.5 mL of CDCl<sub>3</sub> or CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 30 min; followed by PR<sub>3</sub> (0.22 mmol), 1h, base (0.36-0.5 mmol), rt. <sup>b</sup> NMR yield. <sup>c</sup> Added at -78°C and warmed to rt. <sup>d</sup> 65°C.

In light of the efficiency of this transformation, I undertook a study for the product diversity available from this approach. These results are described below.

### **3.2 Results and Discussion**

#### 3.2.1 Alkene-Tethered Imine Synthesis

In order to probe the scope of the reaction in Table 3.1, we first synthesized a number of new alkene-tethered imines. These imines can be easily prepared from known aldehydes in quantitative yields.<sup>16</sup> For example, imines **3.2a**, **3.2b** and **3.2g-j** are generated from salicyladehyde derivatives in a two-step protocol involving initial allylation,<sup>16e</sup> followed by condensation with a primary amine (Scheme 3.2a). A similar approach was used to prepare the

pyrrole-based **3.2f** (Scheme 3.2b) with the substitution of  $K_2CO_3$  for a solution of NaOH and tertbutylammonium hydrogen sulfate (TBAHS).<sup>16a</sup> The carbon-linked imine **3.2c** can be generated by the allylation of the protected aldehyde (Scheme 3.2c)<sup>16h</sup> followed by deprotection and amine condensation. Alternatively, nitrogen-linked alkenes can be synthesized via oxidative ring opening of quinolium salts (for imine **3.2d**), or alkylation and oxidation of 2-aminobenzyl alcohol (for imine **2c**), followed by *N*-allylation and condensation (Scheme 3.2 d and e).<sup>16b,16g</sup> These imines are generally formed in high yields, and isolated by simply evaporating the excess amine and solvent. Finally, the aldehyde precursors to non-aromatic imines<sup>16c,16f</sup> **3.2h-3.2k** can be prepared via previously reported procedures (Scheme 3.2f, 3.2g). These aldehydes also undergo similar condensation reactions with primary amines. In the case of these latter imines they are used soon after completion to avoid decomposition.



57



Scheme 3.2 Synthesis of Olefin-Tethered Imine and Imine Precursors

## 3.2.2 Scope of Polycyclic 2-Pyrroline Synthesis

With these imines in hand, we examined the scope of their phosphonite mediated coupling with acid chlorides to generate 2-pyrrolines. The procedure generally involves the addition of acid chloride to **3.2** to generate an N-acyl iminium salt **3.4** (Scheme 3.3), followed by PhP(2-catechyl) and deprotonation by DBU to form the 1,3-dipole. For most of the substrates employed, cycloaddition of alkene occurs spontaneously to generate 2-pyrrolines with 10 min at ambient temperature.

These steps can each be monitored by in situ <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P NMR. For example, the reaction of N-alkyl imine **3.2c** with toluoyl chloride leads to the formation of iminium salt within 30 min **3.4** (Scheme 3.3), as evidenced disappearance of the imine C(H) signal at 8.41 ppm, and an upfield NC $H_2$ R resonance at 2.43 ppm in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra. The addition of PhP(2-catechyl) results in the rapid generation of the phosphonium salt **3.5** (<sup>31</sup>P NMR: 0.51, 0.19 ppm), within 30 min, and subsequent deprotonation with DBU results in the disappearance of **3.5** and the rapid generation of 2-pyrroline, together with the phosphine oxide (36.91 ppm).<sup>15</sup>



Scheme 3.3 Reaction Mechanism of Polycyclic Pyrrolines

As illustrated in Table 3.2, many of the imines and acid chlorides investigated lead to the formation of polycyclic 2-pyrrolines in high yields. These include imines with oxygen-tethered alkenes, carbon linkers (e.g. entry 2), and even the pyrrole-based imine **3.2f** (entry 5). In addition, to 6,5-fused ring products, 5,5-polycyclic pyrrolines can also be generated. The latter contrasts with previous results employing Münchnones, where short tethers are not tolerated.<sup>17</sup> Each of these products is formed as a single diastereomer, and with a *cis*-fused ring, as demonstrated by NOE experiments performed by Marie Morin that confirm the assignment shown.<sup>18</sup> Due to the sensitivity of the partially reduced pyrrolines, these products were all isolated using a small pipette column of alumina, as detailed in the experimental section. Internal alkenes were also tolerated in this reaction (entry 6), and even internal unactivated alkenes (entries 7, 9). However, the more sterically hindered cyclohexene-linked imine **3.2i** does not undergo cycloaddition (entry 8). Nitrogen tethers were also not suitable under these conditions (entries 3 and 4). In situ <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis shows that these latter imines do not lead to the clean formation of N-acyl iminium salts, presumably due to the steric bulk near the imine unit.



<sup>a</sup> Procedure: Imine (0.2 mmol), acid chloride (0.20-0.22 mmol), 0.5 mL of CDCl<sub>3</sub> or CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 30 min; then PhP(2-catechyl) (0.22 mmol), 1h, added DBU (0.30 mmol), 10 min, rt <sup>b</sup>cycloaddition at 60°C for 1h.

Attempts to expand the scope of this transformation to non-aromatic imines have to date not been successful. In the case of imines **3.2j** and **3.2k**, the steric bulk near the imine carbon appears to inhibit phosphonium salt generation (for imine **3.2k**) or deprotonation (for imine **3.2j**). For aliphatic enolizable imines (**3.2h** and **3.2i**), we observe the rapid formation of enamides upon the addition of acid chloride.



Scheme 3.4 Aliphatic Olefin-Tethered Imines

#### **3.2.3 Reduction of 2-Pyrrolines to Pyrrolidines**

The above transformation provides a straightforward method to generate polycyclic 2pyrrolines. In addition to their own utility, as previously stated, 2-pyrrolines are reactive heterocycles that can serve as intermediates to pyrrolidines under reductive conditions. We were therefore interested in probing the potential of this method to access these latter heterocycles. As shown in Scheme 3.5, the phosphonite mediated synthesis of 2-pyrroline can be coupled with subsequent reduction with NaBH(OAc)<sub>3</sub> to generate polycyclic pyrrolidine **3.4a** (Scheme 3.5) in a one pot, and in high yield. A similar reaction can be performed using chlorothioformate. In this case, reduction appears to also lead to dethiolation **3.4b**. The latter provides a route generate 5-unsubstituted heterocycles: a structure not directly available from the use of acid chlorides.



Scheme 3.5 Transformations of Reactive 2-Pyrrolines

### **3.3 Conclusions**

In conclusion, a range of tethered alkenes have been found to undergo rapid cycloaddition reactions with phospha-Münchnones to generate 2-pyrrolines. These transformations occur with high stereocontrol, and can be coupled with subsequent reduction to allow the synthesis of pyrrolidines. Considering the facile synthesis of phospha-Münchnones from imines, acid chlorides and PhP(2-catechyl), as well as the availability of alkene tethered imines, this provides an attractive to generate a range of polycyclic pyrrolines directly from simple building blocks.

# 3.4 Experimental

# **3.4.1 General Procedures**

All reactions were performed in a Vacuum Atmospheres 553-2 dry box or using Schlenk techniques. All reagents were purchased from commercial sources and used as received. Aldehyde precursors to the imines were prepared by literature procedures.<sup>16</sup> Deuterated CDCl<sub>3</sub> and CD<sub>3</sub>CN were distilled from CaH<sub>2</sub> under nitrogen. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded on Varian Mercury 300 and 400 MHz instruments. HRMS were obtained from the McGill University mass spectra facilities.

# 3.4.2 Synthesis of Olefin-Tethered Aldehydes



2-(allyloxy)-5-bromobenzaldehyde

To a solution of 5-bromo-2-hydroxybenzaldehyde (1.0 equiv) in DMF was added  $K_2CO_3$  (1.5 equiv), and stirred at room temperature for 15 min. Allyl bromide (1.2 equiv.) was added and stirred at room temperature for 18h. The reaction mixture was filtered, diluted with water and extracted with EtOAc

(3x), dried of MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified through column chromatography with solvent gradient of EtOAc:Hexanes 0-30% to give pure 2-(allyloxy)-5-bromobenzaldehyde 79%

# 1-allyl-1H-pyrrole-2-carbaldehyde

To a stirred mixture of 50% aqueous NaOH solution, 2-formylpyrrole (1.0 equiv) and tetra-butylammonium hydrogen sulfate (0.1 equiv) in toluene was allyl bromide (1.03 equiv.) The mixture was then heated at 70°C, with vigorous stirring for 1 h.

The cooled mixture was diluted with water and extracted with ether (3x). The combined organic extracts were washed with water (3x), dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo to give 1-allyl-1H-pyrrole-2-carbaldehyde 66%.

# 2-allylbenzaldehyde



To a solution of 2-(2-bromophenyl)-1,3-dioxolane (1.0 equiv.) in THF was cannula transferred a 1.76 M solution of tBuLi (2.5 equiv.) in n-pentane at -40 °C under N<sub>2</sub>. The mixture was stirred for 2 h and CuBr  $\cdot$  Me<sub>2</sub>S (0.5 equiv.) was added at -40 °C. The mixture was then warmed to 0.°C over 2 h and allul bromide (1.2 equiv.) was

The mixture was then warmed to 0 °C over 2 h and allyl bromide (1.2 equiv.) was added. After being stirred for 2.5 h at room temperature, the reaction was quenched by sat. NH<sub>4</sub>Cl aq. The precipitate was filtrated through a pad of celite and the organic layer was washed with brine, dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by column chromatography with a solvent gradient of EtOAc:Hexanes 0-20% to give pure product. To a solution of the allylated (1.0 equiv.) in acetone was added TsOH  $\cdot$  H<sub>2</sub>O (0.1 equiv.) and the mixture was stirred for 3 h at room temperature. The solvent was evaporated under vacuo and the residue was added solution of NaHCO<sub>3</sub>. The aqueous layer was extracted with EtOAc (3x) and washed with water (3x) and brine (1x), dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by column chromatography with a solvent gradient of EtOAc:Hexanes 0-40% to give pure 2-allylbenzaldehyde 45%

### 2-(allyl(methyl)amino)benzaldehyde



To a solution of quinoline (1.0 equiv.) in acetone was added MeI (1.4 equiv.) and stirred for 1h at 60°C until yellow crystals crashed out. The resulting filtrates was filtered, washed and recrystallized from acetone to give methylated quinoline. To a stirred mixture of potassium hydroxide (10 equiv.) in water and DCE at 0°C

was added hydrogen peroxide (5.0 equiv) in water. 1-Methylquinolinium iodide (1.0 equiv.) in water was added dropwise over 45 min to this vigorously stirred mixture at 0°C, which was then warmed to room temperature and stirred for 72h. Thiodiethanol (0.3 equiv.) was added and after 5 min stirring the layers were separated and the aqueous phase extracted with DCM, washed with water (3x) and sodium sulfite solution (10%) (1x), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by column chromatography with a solvent gradient of EtOAc:Hexanes 0-40% to give pure 2-(allyl(methyl)amino)benzaldehyde 56%.

## tert-butyl allyl(2-formylphenyl)carbamate



A solution of 2-aminobenzyl alcohol (1.0 equiv) in DCE, to it was added Boc<sub>2</sub>O (1.1 equiv.) and heated at 90°C for 2h. Excess solvent was evaporated and reaction mixture was then dissolved in DCM, to it was added MnO<sub>2</sub> (10.0 equiv.) and refluxed for 18h. The cooled reaction mixture was filtered over a pad of celite, concentrated and the residue was purified through column chromatography Boc with solvent gradient of EtOAc: Hexanes 0-5% to give the pure product. A cooled to 0°C solution of tert-butyl (2-formylphenyl)carbamate (1.0 equiv.) and allyl bromide (1.5 equiv.) in DMF was added to a suspension of NaH cooled in DMF. The reaction mixture was stirred at 0°C for 2h. The reaction was quenched with saturated NH<sub>4</sub>Cl and extracted with EtOAc (3x) and washed with water (3x) and brine (1x), died over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified through column chromatography with solvent gradient of EtOAc:Hexanes 0-30% to give pure tert-butyl allyl(2-formylphenyl)carbamate 83%.

## 2-(allyloxy)propanal



To a suspension of NaH (1.2 equiv.) in THF was added ethyl 2hydroxypropanoate (1.0 equiv.) and heated to 60°C for 30 min. After cooling to room temperature, allylbromide (1.1 equiv.) was slowly added and the reaction mixture was stirred for 18 h at 60°C. The solvent was evaporated under vacuo

and replaced with Et<sub>2</sub>O. The salt was filtered and the solvent was dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, and concentrated. To cooled a to -78°C solution of the allylated product, ethyl 2-(allyloxy)propanoate (1.0 equiv.), in Et<sub>2</sub>O was slowly added DIBAL (1M in THF) (1.5 equiv.) and stirred at -78°C for 1 hour. The reaction was worked up with water, extracted with EtOAc (3x), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo to give 2-(allyloxy)propan-1-ol. To a suspension of IBX (2.0 equiv.) in EtOAc was added 2-(allyloxy)propan-1-ol (1.0 equiv.) and heated to 80°C for 5.5 h. The reaction was filtered, concentrated in vacuo and purified through column chromatography with solvent gradient of EtOAc:Hexanes 0-20% to give pure 2-(allyloxy)propanal 67%.

## 2,2-diphenvlhex-5-enal

Ph

A suspension of NaH (1.1 equiv) in THF was cooled to 0 °C. Diphenylacetonitrile (1.0 equiv) was added dropwise over 10 min, and the reaction was allowed to stir for 45 min at 0 °C. Allyl bromide (1.1 equiv) was

added dropwise, and then the reaction mixture was allowed to warm to 25 °C and stirred for 18 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to 0°C and water was slowly added to quench excess NaH. The reaction was diluted 1:1 with Et<sub>2</sub>O and washed with water (3×) and brine (1×) and dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. To the resulting 2,2-diphenylhex-5-enenitrile (1.0 equiv.), in THF was slowly added DIBAL (1M in THF) (1.5 equiv.) and stirred at -78°C to room temperature for 1 hour. The reaction was worked up with water, extracted with EtOAc (3x), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by column chromatography with a solvent gradient of EtOAc:Hexanes 0-40% to give pure 2,2-diphenylhex-5-enenl 58%

## **3.4.3 Typical Synthesis of Imines 3.2**

To a solution of 2-(allyloxy)benzaldehyde (2.5 mmol) in dichloromethane (10 mL) was added MgSO<sub>4</sub> and ethylamine (2.0 M in THF) (2.75 mmol). The heterogeneous mixture was stirred at room temperature for 18h. The reaction mixture was filtered, and the solvent and excess amine were evaporated *in vacuo* to provide the imine as a clear oil. In the preparation of **2b**, **2e** and **2e** imines, exactly 1.0 equivalent of amine was added.

## **3.4.4 Spectroscopic Data**

(E)-N-(2-(allyloxy)benzylidene)ethanamine 3.2a

Let  $^{1}$ H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.77 (s, 1H), 7.96 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 7.34-7.29 (m, 1H), 6.97 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.86 (dd, J = 8.4 Hz, 2.1 Hz, 1H), 6.11-6.01 (m, 1H), 5.41 (dt, J = 17.3 Hz, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 5.29 (dt, J = 10.6 Hz, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 4.58-4.55 (m, 2H), 3.65 (qd, J = 7.3 Hz, 1.3 Hz, 2H), 1.30 (t, J =7.3 Hz, 3H).  $^{13}$ C NMR (126 MHz; CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 157.6, 156.3, 133.0, 131.5, 127.3, 125.1, 121.0, 117.5, 112.3, 69.0, 56.2, 16.5. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>16</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>; calculated:

190.12264, found: 190.12231.

(E)-N-(2-(allyloxy)benzylidene)-1-phenylmethanamine 3.2b

<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.91 (s, 1H), 8.06 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.37-7.35 (m, NBn 5H), 7.30-7.25 (m, 1H), 7.00 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.92 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 6.15-6.05 (m, 1H), 5.44 (dd, J = 17.3 Hz, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 5.34-5.31 (m, 1H), 4.86 (s, 2H), 4.62 (d, J = 5.1 Hz, 2H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  157.9<sub>4</sub>, 157.8<sub>6</sub>, 139.7, 133.0, 131.9, 128.4, 128.0, 127.5, 126.8, 124.9, 121.0, 117.6, 112.3, 69.1, 65.5 **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>18</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>; calculated: 252.13829, found: 252.13766.

## *N*-(2-allylbenzylidene)ethanamine **3.2c**

NEt

<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.53 (s, 1H), 7.87 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.29 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.23 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.00-5.92 (m, 1H), 5.03 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 4.92 (d, J = 17.0 Hz, 1H), 3.63-3.57 (m, 4H), 1.27 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 158.8, 139.0, 137.2, 134.4, 130.3, 130.2, 127.5, 126.8, 116.1, 56.4, 36.9, 16.5. HRMS (APCI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sup>+</sup>;

calculated: 174.12773, found: 174.12772.

#### (*E*)-*N*-((1-allyl-1*H*-pyrrol-2-yl)methylene)ethanamine **3.2d**



108.3, 56.3, 50.6, 16.7. **HRMS** (APCI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{10}H_{15}N_2^{+}$ ; calculated: 163.12298, found: 163.12271.

#### (E)-ethyl 4-((1-((E)-(benzylimino)methyl)naphthalen-2-yl)oxy)but-2-enoate 3.2e



<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz; CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  9.25 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 9.20 (t, J = 1.4 Hz, 1H), 7.87 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.77 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (ddd, J = 8.6 Hz, 6.9 Hz, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.47 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.41-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.31-7.26 (m, 2H), 7.19-7.11 (m, 2H), 6.23 (dt, J = 15.7 Hz, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 4.99 (s, 2H), 4.88 (dd, J = 4.0 Hz, 2.0 Hz,

2H), 4.24 (q, J = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 1.32 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz; CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  166.0, 159.4, 156.5, 142.1, 139.7, 132.6, 132.1, 129.5, 128.5, 128.2, 128.1, 126.9, 125.9, 124.4, 122.3, 118.2, 113.6, 68.0, 66.8, 60.7, 14.3. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>24</sub>NO<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>; calculated: 374.17507, found: 374.17396.

#### N-(2-((E)-but-2-en-1-yloxy)benzylidene)ethanamine 3.2f

CO<sub>2</sub>Et



<sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.75-8.74 (m, 1H), 7.93 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.34 (ddd, J = 8.3 Hz, 7.3 Hz, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 6.98-6.97 (m, 1H), 6.91-6.88 (m, 1H), 5.90-5.83 (m, 1H), 5.79-5.71 (m, 1H), 4.64-4.48 (m, 2H), 3.67-3.62 (m, 2H), 1.78-1.74 (m, 3H), 1.29 (td, J = 7.3 Hz, 1.1 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>), with rotamers: δ 157.8, 156.5,

131.5, 130.3, 128.6, 127.2, 125.9, 125.5, 125.0, 120.9, 120.8, 112.4, 112.2, 69.1, 64.2, 56.1, 17.9, 16.4, 13.4. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{13}H_{18}NO^+$ ; calculated: 204.13829, found: 204.13784.

## (E)-N-(2-(cinnamyloxy)benzylidene)ethanamine 3.2g

<sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.82 (s, 1H), 8.00 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 7.45-7.43 (m, NEt 2H), 7.39-7.34 (m, 3H), 7.29 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.03-6.95 (m, 2H), 6.75 (d, J = 16.0 Hz, 1H), 6.45 (dt, J = 16.0 Hz, 5.8 Hz, 1H), 4.76 (dd, J = 5.8Hz, 1.1 Hz, 2H), 3.68 (qd, J = 7.3 Hz, 1.3 Hz, 2H), 1.33 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 128.7, 128.0, 127.4, 126.6, 125.1, 124.2, 121.1, 112.4, 69.1, 56.2, 16.5. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>20</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>; calculated: 266.15394, found: 266.15345.

#### (E)-N-(2-(allyloxy)benzylidene)hexan-1-amine 3.2h



<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz; CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.74 (s, 1H), 7.96 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 7.35-7.31 (m, 1H), 6.98 (t, J = 7,5 Hz, 1H), 6.89 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 6.12-6.03 (m, 1H), 5.43 (dd, J = 17.3 Hz, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 5.30 (dt, J = 10.6 Hz, 1.3 Hz, 1H), 4.59 (td, J = 3.4 Hz, 1.7 Hz, 2H), 3.62 (td, J = 7.1 Hz, 1.1 Hz, 2H), 1.70 (quintet, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 1.39-1.30

(m, 6H), 0.89 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz; CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  157.6, 156.6, 133.1, 131.5, 127.3, 125.2, 121.0, 117.5, 112.3, 69.1, 62.1, 31.7, 31.0, 27.1, 22.6, 14.1. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>16</sub>H<sub>24</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>; calculated: 246.18524, found: 246.18461.

### 3.4.5 Synthesis of Pyrrolines 3.3

In a glovebox, imine 2 (0.2 mmol) and acid chloride (0.22 mmol) were mixed in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (ca. 0.5 mL) and allowed to stand at room temperature for 30 min. PhP(2-catechyl) (0.22 mmol) was added, and after 1h, DBU (0.3 mmol) was added as a solution in CDCl<sub>3</sub>. The reaction was complete within 10min at room temperature. The crude solution was concentrated in vacuo and purified by dissolving the residue in minimal amount of DCM. The product is purified in a glovebox with small pipette column of alumina using diethyl ether as eluent for **3a-3d** and **3f-3g** or by column chromatography on silica gel using hexanes/diethyl ether 95/5 as eluent for **3e** affording **3** as a pure a light yellow oil

### (3aS,9bR)-1-ethyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,3a,4,9b-tetrahydrochromeno[4,3-b]pyrrole 3.3a



Isolated yield: 85%.<sup>1</sup>H NMR: (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.31ppm (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.26-7.21 (m, 3H), 7.15 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 6.98-6.93 (m, 2H), 4.79 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 4.35 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 4.06 (dd, J = 10.5 Hz, 4.5 Hz, 1 H), 3.83 (t, J = 10.5 Hz, 1H), 3.32-3.21 (m, 2H), 3.09-3.04 (m, 1H), 2.36 (s, 3H), 0.98 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR: (125.7 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  155.5, 155.0, 137.8, 131.3, 130.9, 128.9, 128.7, 127.2, 122.0,

120.4, 117.2, 101.0, 66.3, 57.4, 40.4, 38.6, 21.2, 10.1. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{20}H_{22}NO^+$ ; calculated: 292.16959, found: 292.16908.

(3aS,9bR)-1-benzyl-2-phenyl-1,3a,4,9b-tetrahydrochromeno[4,3-b]pyrrole 3.3b

🤝 u Bn	Isolated yield: 85%. <sup>1</sup> H NMR: (500 MHz, CD <sub>3</sub> CN) $\delta$ 7.49 (dd, $J = 8.2$ Hz, 1.4
√ ¬ ¬ N ¬ Ph	Hz, 2H), 7.40-7.31 (m, 7H), 7.27 (td, <i>J</i> = 6.2 Hz, 3.04 Hz, 1H), 7.17-7.12 (m,
	2H), 6.85-6.81 (m, 2H), 5.08 (d, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 4.41 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 4.32
Õ∕ <mark>\</mark>	(d, J = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 4.27 (d, J = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 4.05 (dd, J = 11.0 Hz, 4.2 Hz,
	1H), 3.95 (dd, $J = 11.0$ Hz, 7.6 Hz, 1H), 3.23-3.19 (m, 1H). <sup>13</sup> C NMR: (125.7

MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN)  $\delta$  161.0, 159.8, 144.2, 138.9, 136.3, 133.8, 133.7, 133.6, 132.4, 132.2, 128.5, 125.9, 122.0, 109.3, 71.6, 63.9, 57.3, 45.3. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>22</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>; calculated: 340.16959, found: 340.16954.

#### (3aS,8bR)-1-ethyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,3a,4,8b-tetrahydroindeno[1,2-b]pyrrole 3.3c



Isolated yield: 74%.<sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.51–7.47 (m, 1H), 7.35–7.31 (m, 2H), 7.29–7.18 (m, 3H), 7.09 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 5.05 (d, J = 2.1 Hz, 1H), 4.79 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 4.04 (t, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 3.26 (dd, J = 16.2 Hz, 8.3 Hz, 1H), 3.19–3.05 (m, 1H), 2.98 (ddd, J = 17.4 Hz, 11.0 Hz, 4.3 Hz, 2H), 2.31 (s, 3H), 1.24 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>CNMR (75 MHz,

CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  151.2, 145.4, 142.0, 137.5, 131.2, 128.8, 127.6, 127.0, 126.5, 125.5, 124.9, 109.6, 72.7, 46.3, 45.9, 38.3, 21.3, 14.3. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>22</sub>N<sup>+</sup>: calculated: 276.17468, found: 276.17430.

#### (3aR,8bR)-1-ethyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,3a,4,8b-tetrahydropyrrolo[2,3-a]pyrrolizine 3.3d



CD<sub>3</sub>CN was used as solvent. Isolated yield: 76%.<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  7.29 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 6.57–6.47 (m, 1H), 6.38 (dd, J = 2.6 Hz, 1.3 Hz, 1H), 6.22 (dd, J = 3.5 Hz, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 4.66 (d, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 4.52 (d, J = 9.5 Hz, 1H), 3.87–3.71 (m, 1H), 3.51 (dd, J = 10.1 Hz, 8.2 Hz, 1H), 3.42 (dd, J = 10.1 Hz, 4.1 Hz, 1H), 3.11 (dq,

J = 14.5 Hz, 7.2 Hz, 1H), 2.71 (dq, J = 13.9 Hz, 7.0 Hz, 1H), 2.02 (s, 3H), 1.05 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  153.1, 138.4, 137.5, 131.4, 128.8, 113.6, 113.5, 103.0, 100.7, 65.6, 52.3, 50.1, 45.2, 20.8, 13.8. HRMS (APCI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>21</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>; calculated: 265.16993, found: 265.16930.

(3aS,11cR)-ethyl 1-benzyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,3a,4,11c-tetrahydrobenzo[5,6]chromeno[4,3-b]pyrrole-3-carboxylate **3.3e** 



Isolated yield: 75%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.79–7.60 (m, 3H), 7.37–7.17 (m, 4H), 7.17–7.07 (m, 6H), 6.69–6.59 (m, 2H), 5.69 (d, J = 9.4 Hz, 1H), 4.20–4.10 (m, 3H), 4.07–3.91 (m, 3H), 3.66 (dt, J = 9.3 Hz, 5.9 Hz, 1H), 2.33 (s, 3H), 1.06 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  165.9, 163.6, 156.1, 138.9, 138.4, 133.7, 130.1, 129.2, 128.8, 128.7, CO<sub>2</sub>Et 128.0, 126.7, 126.5, 123.5, 122.0, 119.3, 112.3, 98.9, 67.3, 58.6, 55.6, 48.1,

40.3, 21.4, 14.3, 14.1. **HRMS** (APCI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{32}H_{30}NO_3^+$ ; calculated: 476.22202, found: 476.22177.

(3aS,9bR)-1-ethyl-2-(4-fluorophenyl)-3-methyl-1,3a,4,9b-tetrahydrochromeno[4,3-b]pyrrole 3.3f



Cycloaddition required 1h at 60°C. Isolated yield: 88%.<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.32–7.18 (m, 4H), 7.04 (m, 2H), 7.00–6.88 (m, 2H), 4.25 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 4.20 (dd, *J* = 10.8 Hz, 4.4 Hz, 1H), 3.93 (t, *J* = 10.3 Hz, 1H), 3.20–2.95 (m, 3H), 1.71 (s, 3H), 0.95 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  161.9 (d, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 237.5 Hz), 155.5, 145.4,

130.9, 130.4 (d,  ${}^{3}J_{C-F} = 7.5$  Hz), 128.7 (d,  ${}^{4}J_{C-F} = 3.0$  Hz), 128.6, 122.4, 120.5, 117.1, 115.1 (d,  ${}^{2}J_{C-F} = 15.0$  Hz), 110.0, 64.8, 56.1, 42.9, 40.8, 11.8, 10.0. **HRMS** (APCI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>21</sub>NOF<sup>+</sup>; calculated: 310.16017, found: 310.16097.

#### (3aS,9bR)-1-ethyl-3-phenyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,3a,4,9b-tetrahydrochromeno[4,3-b]pyrrole 3.3g



131.1<sub>3</sub>, 131.0<sub>8</sub>, 129.6, 129.1, 129.0, 128.1, 126.0, 124.2, 120.7, 120.3, 117.3, 110.6, 65.0, 56.1, 39.9, 38.9, 21.4, 10.5. **HRMS** (APCI<sup>+</sup>) for  $C_{26}H_{26}NO^+$ ; calculated: 368.20089, found: 368.19963.

#### 3.4.6 Synthesis of Pyrrolidines

In a glovebox, imine **2** (0.2 mmol) and acid chloride (0.22 mmol) were mixed in CDCl<sub>3</sub> (ca. 0.5 mL) and allowed to stand at room temperature for 30 min. PhP(2-catechyl) (0.22 mmol) was added, and after 1h, DBU (0.3 mmol) was added as a solution in CDCl<sub>3</sub>. The reaction was complete within 10min at room temperature. To the crude reaction mixture in a 25 mL round bottom flask was added NaBH(OAc)<sub>3</sub> (0.4 mmol) followed by HCl, 1M in Et<sub>2</sub>O (0.4 mmol). The solution is stirred at rt for 18h and then quenched with 4 mL of 2N NaOH. The product is extracted with dichloromethane, washed with water, then dried on MgSO<sub>4</sub>, filtered and concentrated. The product is purified by flash column chromatography on silica using petroleum ether/diethyl ether as eluent 90/10, affording **4** as a white foam.

#### 1-ethyl-2-(p-tolyl)-1,2,3,3a,4,9b-hexahydrochromeno[4,3-b]pyrrole, 3.4a



**4a** was prepared according to the same procedure as **4c**. Isolated yield: 89%. <sup>1</sup>**H** NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.26-7.20 (m, 4H), 7.12 (d, J = 8 Hz, 2H), 6.93 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 4.18 (t, J = 10.5 Hz, 1H), 4.05 (dd, J = 10.5Hz, 4.5 Hz, 1H), 3.83 (t, J = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 3.70 (d, J = 5.5 Hz, 1H), 2.87 (dt, J = 14.5 Hz, 7.0 Hz, 1H), 2.74 (dt, J = 14.5 Hz, 7.0 Hz, 1H), 2.51-2.45 (m,

1H), 2.42-2.35 (m, 1H), 2.33 (s, 3H) 1.31-1.26 (m, 1H), 0.95 (t, J = 7 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125.7 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  155.2, 141.1, 136.5, 131.4, 129.1, 128.6, 127.3, 122.2, 119.9, 116.9, 67.4, 64.1, 57.4, 41.2, 36.1, 33.3, 21.1, 8.2. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>24</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>; calculated: 294.18524, found: 294.18454.

## (3aS,9bR)-1-hexyl-1,2,3,3a,4,9b-hexahydrochromeno[4,3-b]pyrrole 3.4b



<sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.21–7.16 (m, 2H), 6.91–6.87 (m, 2H), 4.05–3.91 (m, 2H), 3.17-3.13 (m, 1H), 3.08-2.98 (m, 2H), 2.41-2.34 (m, 1H), 2.23-2.19 (m, 2H), 2.08-2.01 (m, 1H), 1.54–1.35 (m, 3H), 1.27-1.24 (m, 6H), 0.86 (t, J = 6.6 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>**C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 155.2, 131.9, 128.6, 121.7, 119.6, 116.8, 67.6, 61.5, 53.3, 50.9, 34.3, 31.8, 28.4, 27.3, 24.6, 22.6, 14.1. **HRMS** (APCI<sup>+</sup>) for elaulated: 260 20121 found: 260 20140

C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>26</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>; calculated: 260.20131, found: 260.20199

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#### CONCLUSIONS

1,3-Dipolar cycloaddition reactions represent an important general approach to prepare five-membered ring heterocycles. This thesis explored two new variants of this transformation with a 1,3-dipole developed in our laboratory: phospha-Münchnones. Chapter 2 describes how electron deficient *N*-nosyl substituted imines, and tethered-nitriles, can undergo cycloaddition reactions with phospha-Münchnones to generate imidazoles. Considering that these dipoles are generated in one pot reactions of imines, acid chlorides and phosphonites, these provide efficient routes to construct polysubstituted imidazoles from simple and available building blocks.

In light of the successful synthesis of imidazoles, olefin-tethered imines were investigated in the synthesis of polycyclic 2-pyrrolines in Chapter 3. Phosphonites again proved to be effective for the formation of reactive phospha-Münchnones from imines and acid chlorides. When coupled with intramolecular alkene cycloaddition, this allows the preparation of 2pyrrolines in high yields and with facile access to product diversity.

In conclusion, phosphonite-mediated 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions provide an efficient approach to generate structurally complex nitrogen-containing heterocycles that would be difficult to prepare using traditional, often multistep, methods.

**APPENDIX** A <sup>1</sup>HNMR and <sup>13</sup>CNMR Spectra of Nitrile Tethered Imines and Imidazoles


























2.5d





2.5f



220 210 200 190 180 170 160 150 140 130 120 110 100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0 -10 fl (ppm)









2.5j















2.7e



















2.7j



## APPENDIX B <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR Spectra of Olefin-Tethered Imines and 2-Pyrrolines 3.2a





3.2b







**3.2d** 



3.2f







3.2h







3.3b



3.3c


3.3e





**3.3f** 



3.3g



