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## Synthesis, structure and pyrolysis of stabilised phosphonium ylides containing saturated oxygen heterocycles†

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A range of twelve stabilised phosphonium ylides containing tetrahydrofuran, tetrahydropyran or 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane rings have been prepared and fully characterised, including one X-ray structure determination of each type. The X-ray structures confirm the P=C and C=O functions to be *syn* and all the compounds undergo thermal extrusion of Ph<sub>3</sub>PO to give the corresponding alkynes. In some cases there is also competing loss of Ph<sub>3</sub>P to give different carbene-derived products and evidence has been obtained for the generation of 2-phenyloxete in this way. Raising the pyrolysis temperature leads in several cases to new secondary reactions of the alkyne products involving a sequence of alkyne to vinylidene isomerisation, intramolecular CH insertion, and retro Diels Alder reaction.

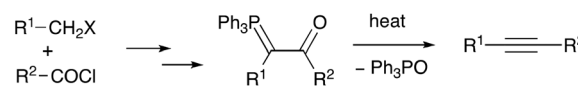
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### Introduction

Thermal extrusion of Ph<sub>3</sub>PO from suitably substituted β-oxo-phosphonium ylides in the so-called “intramolecular Wittig reaction” is a versatile method of alkyne synthesis.<sup>1</sup> The ylides are readily prepared in a few simple steps from alkyl halides and acid chlorides as stable crystalline solids, and overall this represents an unusual way to construct the alkyne triple bond (Scheme 1). The process was first described in 1959 for R<sup>1</sup> = R<sup>2</sup> = Ph where simply heating the ylide at 300 °C resulted in the desired elimination of Ph<sub>3</sub>PO to give diphenylacetylene in 59% yield.<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter a convenient synthesis of acetylenic esters by pyrolysis of the ylides with R<sup>1</sup> = CO<sub>2</sub>Me was reported.<sup>3</sup> Over the next 25 years many further examples appeared, but using conventional pyrolysis the scope was limited to examples where R<sup>1</sup> was an electron withdrawing group.<sup>4</sup> This restriction was overcome by the use of flash vacuum pyrolysis (FVP) which allowed synthesis of purely aliphatic and terminal alkynes from ylides with R<sup>1</sup> = alkyl or H.<sup>5</sup> Using this method, a wide range of functionalised alkynes have been prepared and typical examples include the synthesis of fused ring heterocycles *via* cascade cyclisation<sup>6,7</sup> and chiral amino acid-derived



Scheme 1

alkynes.<sup>8</sup> FVP is a technique of increasing importance in the synthesis of heterocyclic compounds,<sup>9</sup> but has not so far seen any significant application in carbohydrate chemistry. In fact the use of FVP in carbohydrate chemistry is effectively limited to a single example: the pyrolytic elimination of acetic acid to form a derivative of zanamivir (Relenza).<sup>10</sup> In this paper we describe the preparation and pyrolysis behaviour of a series of ylides containing tetrahydrofuran, tetrahydropyran and 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane rings to check the compatibility of these ring systems common in carbohydrates with the conditions required for alkyne formation. There has been considerable interest in acetylenic carbohydrate derivatives, both in their own right,<sup>11</sup> and as intermediates in synthesis of modified nucleosides.<sup>12,13</sup> Alkyne-containing 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolanes have also found use in total synthesis.<sup>14,15</sup> There is a single previous example of this approach in which a tetrahydropyran-containing ylide **1** was prepared and subjected to conventional pyrolysis at 200–250 °C (heating the solid above its mp) to afford alkyne **2** in 75% yield (Scheme 2).<sup>16</sup>

### Results and discussion

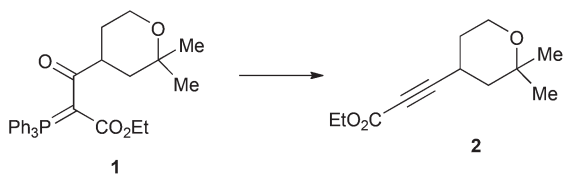
The ylides **4** were prepared by two different methods depending on the nature of R<sup>1</sup> (Scheme 3). For monostabilised ylides

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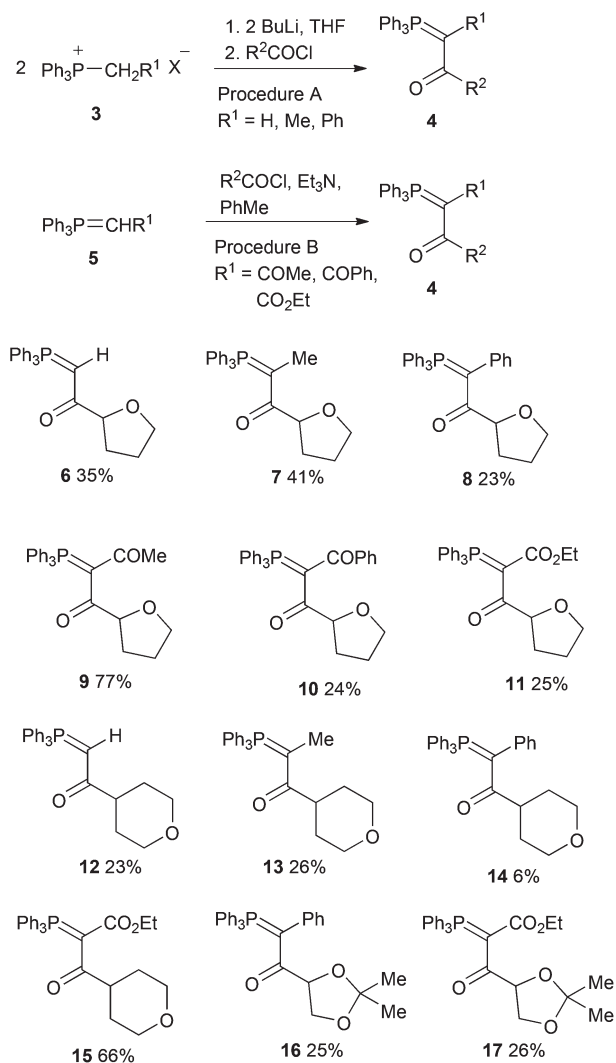
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† Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available: Copies of <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra of all compounds. CCDC 1435297–1435299. For ESI and crystallographic data in CIF or other electronic format see DOI: 10.1039/c5ob02467f

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Scheme 2



Scheme 3 Synthetic routes used and new ylides prepared.

( $\text{R}^1 = \text{H, Me, Ph}$ ) reaction of the appropriate phosphonium salt **3** with butyllithium in THF followed by the acid chloride proceeded with “transylation”<sup>17</sup> requiring a 2 : 1 reacting ratio, while for distabilised ylides ( $\text{R}^1 = \text{COMe, COPh, CO}_2\text{Et}$ ) reaction of **5** with the acid chloride and triethylamine in toluene was used.<sup>18</sup> Tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride was prepared by reaction of the commercially available acid with oxalyl chloride, tetrahydropyran-4-carbonyl chloride was prepared by hydrolysis of methyl tetrahydropyran-4-carboxylate using

sodium hydroxide followed by reaction with thionyl chloride, while 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane-4-carbonyl chloride was prepared from mannitol diacetone by sodium periodate cleavage<sup>19</sup> followed by potassium permanganate oxidation of the resulting aldehyde and treatment of the potassium carboxylate with oxalyl chloride.<sup>20</sup> The 12 ylides **6–17** were obtained in low to moderate yield as colourless or pale yellow crystals (Scheme 3). They all gave <sup>31</sup>P NMR chemical shifts in the range  $\delta_{\text{p}} +14.9\text{--}17.9$  and the <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra showed a highly consistent and informative pattern of phosphorus coupling. X-Ray diffraction has previously been used to obtain valuable information on the structure of stabilised ylides, particularly in respect of the  $\text{P}=\text{C}-\text{C}=\text{O}$  torsion angle which is important for successful pyrolytic alkyne formation.<sup>21</sup> Since no X-ray structures of ylides containing saturated oxygen heterocycles are known, we have determined the structure of one representative example from each of the three ring systems.

The structure of compound **10** (Fig. 1) shows an almost planar tetrahydrofuran ring and both carbonyl groups *syn* to the  $\text{P}=\text{C}$  bond. However the degree of delocalisation in the sense  $\text{P}^+-\text{C}=\text{C}-\text{O}^-$  as indicated by the CC and CO bond lengths is much greater for the CO-THF function with a torsion angle of  $0.7^\circ$  than for the COPh with a torsion angle of  $34^\circ$ .

In the tetrahydropyran series, the structure of the mono-stabilised ylide **13** was determined (Fig. 2) and this shows the tetrahydropyran in an almost perfect chair conformation with the oxo ylide function equatorial. The bond lengths again show the oxo ylide function to be substantially delocalised in the sense  $\text{P}^+-\text{C}=\text{C}-\text{O}^-$  and  $\text{P}=\text{C}$  and  $\text{C}=\text{O}$  are *syn*.

The structure of **17** proved to be more complex with two separate and slightly different molecules in the unit cell (Fig. 3). In each case the ester carbonyl is *anti* to the  $\text{P}=\text{C}$  bond while the dioxolanyl ketone is *syn* to it but, while the molecule containing P(41) has these functions almost coplanar (torsion angles  $178.7$  and  $1.0^\circ$ ), the geometry for the other molecule containing P(1) is less ideal (torsion angles  $156.8$  and  $10.6^\circ$ ).

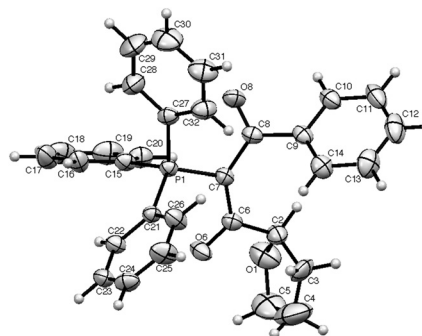
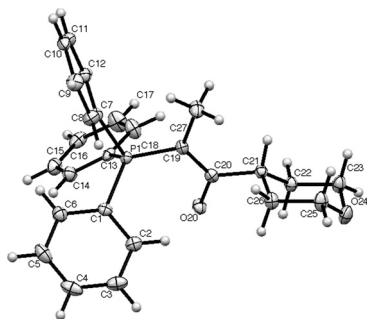
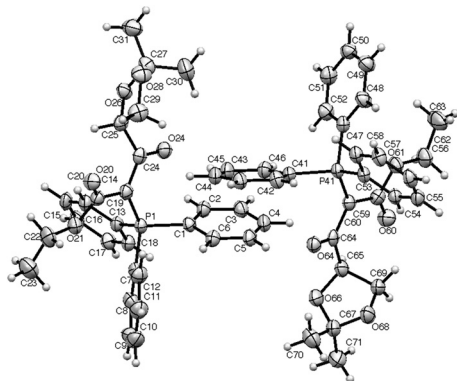


Fig. 1 X-ray structure of **10** showing numbering scheme. Selected bond lengths and torsion angles:  $\text{P}(1)-\text{C}(7)$  1.752(2),  $\text{C}(7)-\text{C}(8)$  1.459(3),  $\text{C}(8)-\text{O}(8)$  1.232(2),  $\text{C}(7)-\text{C}(6)$  1.423(3),  $\text{C}(6)-\text{O}(6)$  1.240(2) Å;  $\text{P}(1)-\text{C}(7)-\text{C}(8)-\text{O}(8)$   $34.2(2)$ ,  $\text{P}(1)-\text{C}(7)-\text{C}(6)-\text{O}(6)$   $0.7(2)^\circ$ .



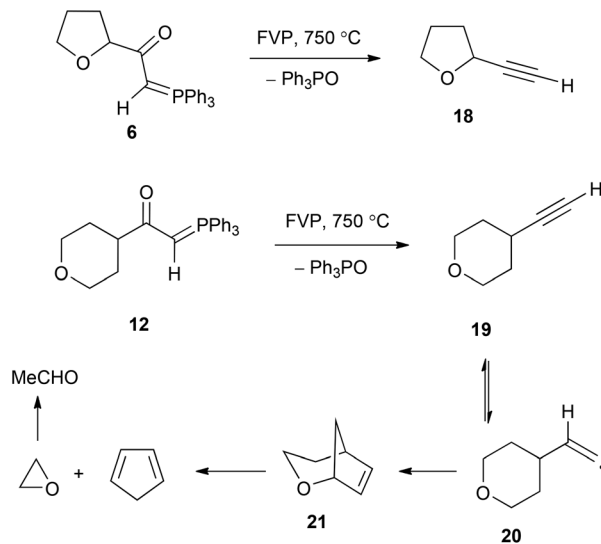


**Fig. 2** X-ray structure of **13** showing numbering scheme. Selected bond lengths and torsion angle: P(1)–C(19) 1.729(2), C(19)–C(20) 1.396(2), C(20)–O(20) 1.267(2) Å; P(1)–C(19)–C(20)–O(20) 2.4(2)°.

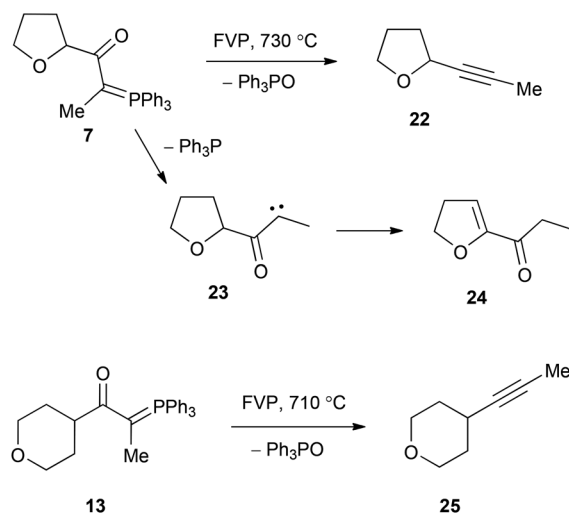


**Fig. 3** X-ray structure of **17** showing numbering scheme. Selected bond lengths and torsion angles: P(1)–C(19) 1.751(5), C(19)–C(24) 1.434(6), C(24)–O(24) 1.227(7), C(19)–C(20) 1.445(9), C(20)–O(20) 1.208(7), P(41)–C(59) 1.760(6), C(59)–C(60) 1.445(9), C(60)–O(60) 1.215(7), C(59)–C(64) 1.444(6), C(64)–O(64) 1.224(7) Å; P(1)–C(19)–C(24)–O(24) 10.6(7), P(1)–C(19)–C(20)–O(20) 156.8(4), P(41)–C(59)–C(60)–O(60) 178.7(4), P(41)–C(59)–C(64)–O(64) 1.0(7)°.

The behaviour of the compounds was now studied under flash vacuum pyrolysis conditions. The apparatus used has been described previously,<sup>22</sup> and based on our extensive experience with oxo stabilised ylides, temperatures in the range 500–750 °C were used with a pressure of  $1\text{--}5 \times 10^{-2}$  Torr. The two compounds with a hydrogen atom on the ylidic bond, **6** and **12**, reacted completely at 750 °C with clean extrusion of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  being observed in each case (Scheme 4). For **6** the other product was the expected terminal alkyne **18** (36%) together with a little furan and benzene from thermal degradation. In the case of the tetrahydropyran compound **12**, the expected alkyne **19** (42%) was again formed but this was now accompanied by low yields of cyclopentadiene and acetaldehyde. We believe these to result from the mechanism shown in Scheme 4 in which the alkyne isomerises to the vinylidene **20** and this undergoes intramolecular CH insertion at the 2-position of the tetrahydropyran to form the bicyclic product **21**. This is then set up to undergo a retro Diels–Alder reaction with formation of cyclopentadiene and oxirane, which



**Scheme 4**

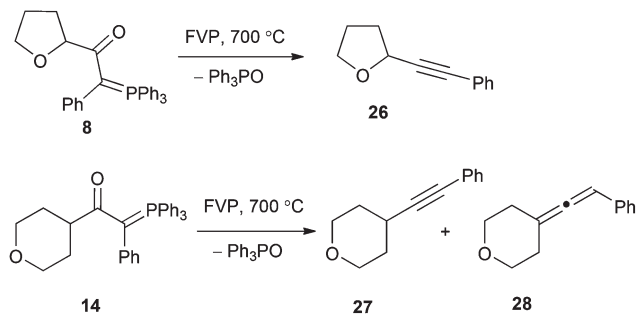


**Scheme 5**

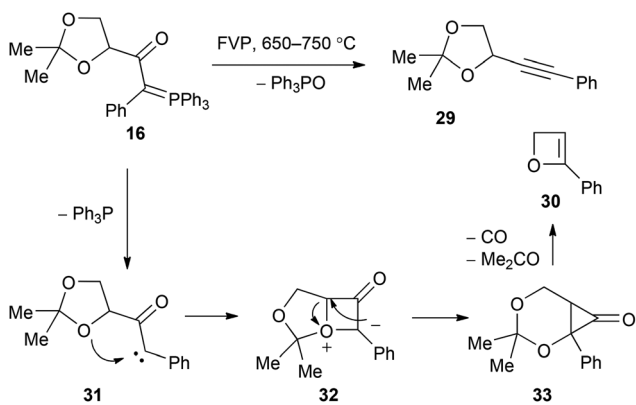
isomerises to acetaldehyde. The formation of vinylidenes such as **20** by rearrangement of alkynes under FVP conditions is well known,<sup>23</sup> and will be encountered again in the FVP of **9** and **10**.

The ylide **7** with a methyl group on the ylidic position reacted completely at 730 °C to give a 2 : 1 mixture of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{P}$  and  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  at the furnace exit. In the cold trap the expected alkyne **22** (20%) from loss of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  was accompanied by 2-propionyl-4,5-dihydrofuran **24** (30%) (Scheme 5). We propose that this product is formed by loss of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{P}$  to give the (triplet) carbene **23**, which then undergoes twofold intramolecular hydrogen atom abstraction to afford the product. In contrast the corresponding tetrahydropyran ylide **13** underwent exclusive elimination of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  at 710 °C to give the expected alkyne **25** in





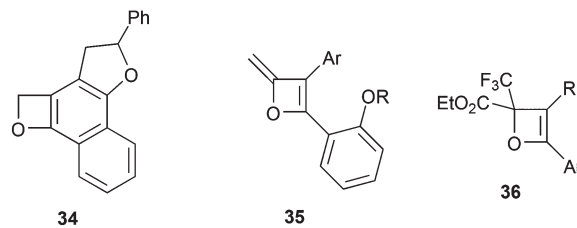
Scheme 6



Scheme 7

good yield as the only product. The extrusion of a phosphine as opposed to phosphine oxide from  $\beta$ -oxophosphonium ylides is very unusual, but has been observed in the FVP of a benzotriazolyl ylide,<sup>24,25</sup> and also upon photolysis of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{P}=\text{CHCOPh}$ .<sup>26</sup>

The two compounds **8** and **14** with a phenyl substituent on the ylidic carbon both reacted completely at 700 °C with exclusive elimination of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$ . With the tetrahydrofuran compound **8** the product was the known alkyne **26** (56%) (Scheme 6), which showed good agreement with literature spectroscopic data,<sup>27,28</sup> while for the tetrahydropyran compound **14**, the expected alkyne product **27** (46%) was accompanied by the isomeric allene **28** (20%). The ylide **16** containing phenyl and 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane groups was found to undergo loss of both  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  and  $\text{Ph}_3\text{P}$  to give separate products with the relative importance of the two competing pathways varying with temperature (Scheme 7). Thus at 650 °C, there was predominant loss of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  ( $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}/\text{Ph}_3\text{P}$  8 : 1) to afford the expected alkyne **29** in 48% yield readily identified by comparison with reported spectroscopic data.<sup>29</sup> By increasing the pyrolysis temperature to 750 °C the importance of the  $\text{Ph}_3\text{P}$  elimination route was increased ( $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}/\text{Ph}_3\text{P}$  3 : 1) and this allowed tentative identification of the resulting product as 2-phenyloxete **30**. A correct HRMS measurement corresponding to **30** was obtained and, although peak overlap pre-



Scheme 8 Previously reported oxetes.

vented full spectroscopic characterisation, the key signals in  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectra were consistent with a highly shielded (enol ether)  $=\text{CH}-$  [ $\delta_{\text{H}}$  6.16 (1 H, t,  $J$  6.9);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  93.9] adjacent to a  $-\text{CH}_2\text{O}-$  [ $\delta_{\text{H}}$  5.14 (2 H, d,  $J$  6.9);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  78.7] function. The latter compares well with the value of  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  5.44 observed for the oxete  $\text{CH}_2$  in compound **34** (Scheme 8).<sup>30</sup>

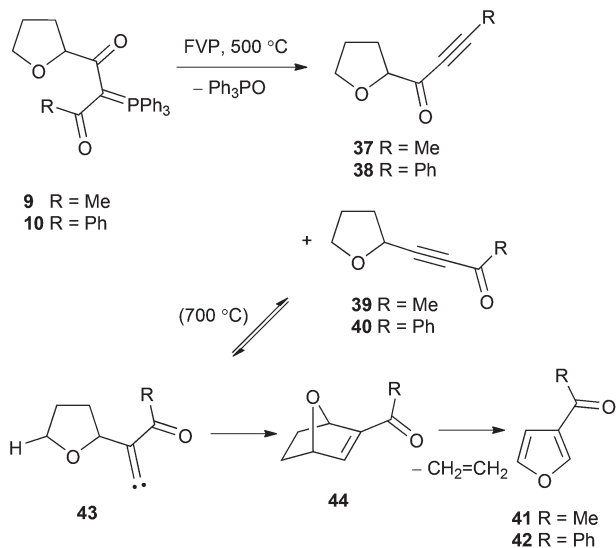
Simple oxetes such as this are almost unknown but there has been recent interest in more highly substituted examples such as the 4-methylene compounds **35** obtained by gold-catalysed cyclisation of  $\alpha$ -hydroxybenzylallenes,<sup>31</sup> and stable fully substituted compounds **36** prepared in high enantiomeric purity from ethyl trifluoropyruvate and alkynes.<sup>32</sup> The parent compound has also been generated<sup>33</sup> and was stable enough for a  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum to be recorded at  $-25$  °C [ $\delta_{\text{H}}$  6.70 (1 H, br s), 5.73 (1 H, br s) and 5.27 (2 H, br s)], but it isomerised to acrolein on warming to room temperature.

We rationalise the formation of **30**, as shown in Scheme 7, by initial loss of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{P}$  from ylide **16** to give the carbene **31** which undergoes intramolecular oxonium ylide formation to form **32**. This can then rearrange as shown to give **33**, which loses CO and acetone to afford the oxete. Further support for this route was provided by the observation of acetone among the pyrolysis products.

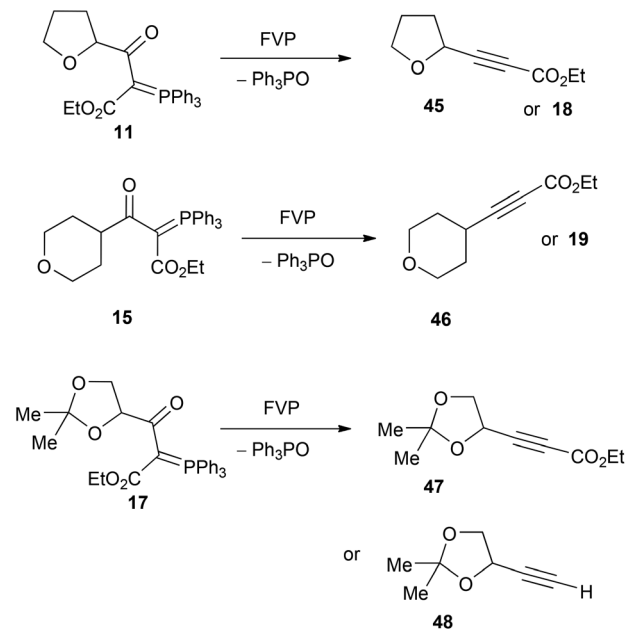
We next examined the two ylides **9** and **10** where there is potentially a choice between elimination of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  in two directions to give isomeric alkynyl ketones. In previous such cases there has been little selectivity with almost equal proportions of the two possible products being formed.<sup>34,35</sup> This also proved to be the case here, with compound **9** undergoing complete extrusion of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  at 500 °C to afford a mixture of **37** (26%) and **39** (58%), while the benzoyl compound **10** gave a mixture of **38** (29%) and **40** (30%) under the same conditions (Scheme 9). All these alkynyl ketone products are previously unknown.

When ylides **9** and **10** were pyrolysed at the higher temperature of 700 °C an interesting new process was observed. In each case the previously observed alkynyl ketones were still formed but these were accompanied by the 3-acylfurans **41** and **42**, readily identified by comparison with literature spectroscopic data.<sup>36,37</sup> Thus FVP of **9** at 700 °C gave **37** (18%), **39** (33%) and **41** (17%) while under the same conditions **10** gave **38** (12%), **40** (14%) and **42** (37%). As shown we propose that this involves isomerisation<sup>23</sup> of the alkynyl ketones **39** and **40** to the vinylidene **43** which undergoes intramolecular





Scheme 9



Scheme 10

insertion into the marked CH bond to give the oxabicyclic compounds **44** which are ideally set up to undergo retro-Diels Alder elimination of ethene to afford the observed acylfuran products.

Pyrolysis of ylides containing both adjacent ester and ketone carbonyl functions is well known to result in elimination of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  only from the latter to give acetylenic esters. The method was first developed by Märkl using conventional pyrolysis of methyl esters,<sup>3</sup> but was later shown to also be amenable to FVP conditions using ethyl esters.<sup>38</sup> An added advantage of using the latter technique is that, while efficient  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$  elimination to give the acetylenic esters occurs at 500 °C, simply increasing the temperature to 750 °C additionally leads to loss of the whole ester group to afford the alk-1-ynes. Mechanistic studies of this unusual process have been described.<sup>39</sup> In agreement with this pattern, when the three ester-containing ylides **11**, **15**, and **17** were subjected to FVP, mixtures of the acetylenic esters and the alk-1-ynes were obtained with the ratio depending on the temperature (Scheme 10). Thus at 500 °C, FVP of **11** gave ester **45** (42%) together with the alkyne **18** (16%). At 750 °C, there was extensive decomposition with only products such as furan and cyclopentadiene isolated in low yield. FVP of the tetrahydropyran ylide **15** at 500 °C gave the ester **46** in 60% yield, while increasing the furnace temperature to 750 °C led to alkyne **19** (30%) together with the decomposition products cyclopentadiene (20%) and acetaldehyde (25%) formed from **19** as shown in Scheme 4.

FVP of **17** at 600 °C gave mainly the ester **47** (68%) with a little of the alkyne **48** (9%) while at 650 °C the ratio of products had changed to **47** (39%) and **48** (30%). It therefore appears that lower temperature FVP of these three ylides provides an effective route to the acetylenic esters but for the alk-1-ynes FVP of ylides such as **6** and **12** is preferable.

## Experimental

### Instrumentation, general techniques and starting materials

Melting points were recorded on a Kofler hot-stage microscope and are uncorrected. Infra red spectra were recorded as Nujol mulls for solids and as thin films for liquids on a Perkin Elmer 1420 instrument. NMR spectra were obtained for  $^1\text{H}$  at 300, 400 or 500 MHz, for  $^{13}\text{C}$  at 75, 100 or 125 MHz and for  $^{31}\text{P}$  at 121 MHz all using Bruker instruments. All spectra were run on solutions in  $\text{CDCl}_3$  with internal  $\text{Me}_4\text{Si}$  as reference for  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  and external  $\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4$  for  $^{31}\text{P}$ . Chemical shifts are reported in ppm to high frequency of the reference and coupling constants  $J$  are in Hz. Mass spectra were obtained on a Micromass LCT spectrometer using electrospray ionisation.

Tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride was prepared (87%) by reaction of the commercially available acid with oxalyl chloride, tetrahydropyran-4-carbonyl chloride was prepared by hydrolysis of methyl tetrahydropyran-4-carboxylate using sodium hydroxide (quant.) followed by reaction with thionyl chloride (84%), while 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane-4-carbonyl chloride was prepared from mannitol diacetone by sodium periodate cleavage<sup>19</sup> followed by potassium permanganate oxidation of the resulting aldehyde and treatment of the potassium carboxylate with oxalyl chloride.<sup>20</sup>

### General procedure A for synthesis of monostabilised ylides

A suspension of the appropriate phosphonium salt (1 equiv.) in dry THF was stirred at rt under nitrogen while a solution of  $n\text{-BuLi}$  in hexanes (2.5 M, 1 equiv.) was added dropwise by syringe. After the addition the mixture was stirred for 30 min and then a solution of the acid chloride (0.5 equiv.) in dry THF was added dropwise. The mixture was stirred for 12 h and then



partitioned between water and diethyl ether. The organic extract was dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>) and evaporated to give the product. If necessary a little EtOAc was added to induce crystallisation and the products were recrystallised from EtOAc.

### General procedure B for synthesis of distabilised ylides

A solution of the appropriate stabilised ylide (1 equiv.) and triethylamine (1 equiv.) in dry toluene (15 cm<sup>3</sup>) was stirred at rt while a solution of the acid chloride (1 equiv.) in dry toluene (5 cm<sup>3</sup>) was added dropwise. After stirring for 12 h, the mixture was filtered to remove triethylamine hydrochloride and the filtrate was evaporated to give the product. If necessary a little EtOAc was added to induce crystallisation and the products were recrystallised from EtOAc.

### Tetrahydrofuran-containing ylides

**1-(Tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)ethan-1-one 6.** Reaction using procedure A with methyltriphenylphosphonium bromide (10.62 g, 29.7 mmol) in THF (50 cm<sup>3</sup>), 2.5 M *n*-BuLi (12.34 cm<sup>3</sup>, 29.7 mmol) and tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride (2.00 g, 14.86 mmol) in THF (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (1.97 g, 35%) as pale yellow crystals, mp 187–189 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 375.1504. C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>2</sub>P (M + H) requires 375.1514);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1531 (CO), 1102, 1072, 872, 758, 716 and 696;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.70–7.60 (6 H, m), 7.60–7.50 (3 H, m), 7.50–7.40 (6 H, m), 4.40–4.30 (1 H, m, 2-H), 4.16 (1 H, d, *J* 26.3, CH=P), 4.10–4.00 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.90–3.80 (1 H, m, 5-H), 2.30–2.15 (1 H, m) and 2.10–1.80 (3 H, m);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (100 MHz) 193.6 (d, *J* 3, CO), 133.0 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of Ph), 132.0 (d, *J* 1, C-4 of Ph), 128.8 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of Ph), 127.0 (d, *J* 90, C-1 of Ph), 83.0 (d, *J* 13, 2-CH), 68.9 (5-CH<sub>2</sub>), 48.5 (d, *J* 109, P=CH), 30.9 (3-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.7 (4-CH<sub>2</sub>);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +16.2; *m/z* (ESI) 771.28 (2M + Na, 7%), 397.13 (M + Na, 12) and 375.15 (M + H, 100).

**1-(Tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)propan-1-one 7.** Reaction using procedure A with ethyltriphenylphosphonium bromide (5.6 g, 15 mmol) in THF (40 cm<sup>3</sup>), 2.5 M *n*-BuLi (6.0 cm<sup>3</sup>, 15 mmol) and tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride (1.0 g, 7.43 mmol) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (1.20 g, 41%) as colourless crystals, mp 115–117 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 389.1620. C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>26</sub>O<sub>2</sub>P (M + H) requires 389.1670);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1520 (CO), 1105, 923, 750, 711 and 693;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.60–7.39 (15 H, m), 4.87 (1 H, td, *J* 7.2, 1.2, 2-H), 4.04–3.97 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.90–3.83 (1 H, m, 5-H), 2.15–2.07 (1 H, m), 2.00–1.60 (3 H, m) and 1.68 (3 H, d, *J* 16.5, Me);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (75 MHz) 188.4 (d, *J* 4, CO), 133.4 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of Ph), 131.3 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of Ph), 128.5 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of Ph), 127.3 (d, *J* 90, C-1 of Ph), 78.8 (d, *J* 14, 2-CH), 68.8 (5-CH<sub>2</sub>), 55.7 (d, *J* 107, P=C), 29.3 (3-CH<sub>2</sub>), 25.9 (4-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 12.3 (d, *J* 12, Me);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +17.9; *m/z* (ESI) 389.16 (M + H, 100).

**2-Phenyl-1-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)ethan-1-one 8.** Reaction using procedure A with benzyltriphenylphosphonium chloride (5.78 g, 14.86 mmol) in THF (20 cm<sup>3</sup>), 2.5 M *n*-BuLi (6.0 cm<sup>3</sup>, 15.0 mmol) and tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride (1.0 g, 7.43 mmol) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (0.78 g, 23%) as pale yellow crystals, mp

179–182 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 451.1809. C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>28</sub>O<sub>2</sub>P (M + H) requires 451.1827);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1530 (CO), 1223, 1106, 1068, 746, 701 and 693;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.57–7.42 (9 H, m), 7.38–7.32 (6 H, m), 7.05–6.95 (5 H, m), 4.58 (1 H, t, *J* 6.4, 2-H), 4.00–3.92 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.80–3.73 (1 H, m, 5-H), 1.99–1.82 (3 H, m) and 1.73–1.65 (1 H, m);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (125 MHz) 189.0 (d, *J* 5, CO), 137.2 (d, *J* 11, C-1 of Ph), 135.0 (d, *J* 5, C-2 of Ph), 133.6 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of PPh), 131.4 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of PPh), 128.4 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of PPh), 127.5 (d, *J* 1, C-3 of Ph), 126.8 (d, *J* 90, C-1 of PPh), 125.2 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of Ph), 78.2 (d, *J* 12, 2-CH), 70.2 (d, *J* 106, P=C), 69.2 (5-CH<sub>2</sub>), 30.4 (3-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 26.2 (4-CH<sub>2</sub>);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +15.5; *m/z* (ESI) 923.34 (2M + Na, 42%), 473.16 (M + Na, 6) and 451.18 (M + H, 100).

**1-(Tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)butane-1,3-dione 9.** Reaction using procedure B with triphenylphosphoranylideneacetone (2.37 g, 7.43 mmol), triethylamine (1.03 cm<sup>3</sup>, 0.75 g, 7.43 mmol) and tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride (1.00 g, 7.43 mmol) in toluene (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (2.4 g, 77%) as colourless crystals, mp 127.5–129.5 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 439.1421. C<sub>26</sub>H<sub>25</sub>NaO<sub>3</sub>P (M + Na) requires 439.1439);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1553 (CO), 1108, 1066, 757 and 698;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.70–7.60 (6 H, m), 7.50–7.35 (9 H, m), 4.86 (1 H, dd, *J* 7.5, 5.4, 2-H), 3.89–3.82 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.76–3.69 (1 H, m, 5-H), 2.15–2.00 (2 H, m), 2.09 (3 H, d, *J* 0.6, Me) and 1.82–1.72 (2 H, m);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (75 MHz) 196.2 (d, *J* 7, 1-CO), 192.7 (d, *J* 10, 3-CO), 133.0 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of Ph), 131.6 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of Ph), 128.5 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of Ph), 126.3 (d, *J* 91, C-1 of Ph), 86.0 (d, *J* 100, P=C), 80.9 (d, *J* 6, 2-CH), 68.8 (5-CH<sub>2</sub>), 30.1 (d, *J* 4, Me), 29.6 (3-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.3 (4-CH<sub>2</sub>);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +15.6; *m/z* (ESI) 855.30 (2M + Na, 12%), 439.14 (M + Na, 100) and 417.16 (M + H, 18).

**1-Phenyl-3-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)propane-1,3-dione 10.** Reaction using procedure B with triphenylphosphoranylideneacetophenone (2.83 g, 7.43 mmol), triethylamine (1.03 cm<sup>3</sup>, 0.75 g, 7.43 mmol) and tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride (1.00 g, 7.43 mmol) in toluene (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (0.84 g, 24%) as pale yellow crystals, mp 179–181 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 479.1762. C<sub>31</sub>H<sub>28</sub>O<sub>3</sub>P (M + H) requires 479.1776);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1546 (CO), 1317, 1105, 1061, 713 and 694;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.70–7.60 (8 H, m), 7.50–7.25 (12 H, m), 4.54 (1 H, t, *J* 6.7, 2-H), 3.85–3.70 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.65–3.55 (1 H, m, 5-H), 1.85–1.75 (2H, m) and 1.70–1.57 (2 H, m);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (75 MHz) 195.0 (d, *J* 3, CO), 192.8 (d, *J* 10, CO), 143.4 (d, *J* 8, C-1 of COPh), 133.2 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of PPh), 131.7 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of PPh), 130.8 (C-4 of COPh), 128.8 (2CH of COPh), 128.5 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of PPh), 128.1 (2CH of COPh), 125.7 (d, *J* 92, C-1 of PPh), 83.3 (d, *J* 100, P=C), 79.7 (d, *J* 9, 2-CH), 69.1 (5-CH<sub>2</sub>), 30.1 (3-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.4 (4-CH<sub>2</sub>);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +17.5; *m/z* (ESI) 979.33 (2M + Na, 62%), 501.16 (M + Na, 55) and 479.18 (M + H, 100).

**Ethyl 3-oxo-3-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)propanoate 11.** Reaction using procedure B with ethyl triphenylphosphoranylideneacetate (2.58 g, 7.43 mmol), triethylamine (1.03 cm<sup>3</sup>, 0.75 g, 7.43 mmol) and tetrahydrofuran-2-carbonyl chloride (1.00 g, 7.43 mmol) in toluene (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (0.82 g, 25%) as colourless crystals, mp 175–177 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 447.1712. C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>28</sub>O<sub>4</sub>P



(M + H) requires 447.1725);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1654 (CO), 1575 (CO), 1299, 1105, 1082, 750 and 692;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.70–7.60 (6 H, m), 7.58–7.38 (9 H, m), 5.51 (1 H, ddd, *J* 8.2, 5.2, 1.0, 2-H), 3.95–3.80 (2 H, m, 5-H), 3.80–3.65 (2 H, m, CH<sub>2</sub> of Et), 2.50–2.38 (1 H, m), 2.10–1.90 (1H, m), 1.90–1.75 (2 H, m) and 0.67 (3 H, t, *J* 7.1, CH<sub>3</sub> of Et);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (100 MHz) 196.6 (d, *J* 3, 3-CO), 167.4 (d, *J* 15, 1-CO), 133.0 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of Ph), 131.5 (d, *J* 2, C-4 of Ph), 128.4 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of Ph), 126.5 (d, *J* 93, C-1 of Ph), 80.7 (d, *J* 9, 2-CH), 69.1 (5-CH<sub>2</sub>), 68.8 (d, *J* 109, P=C), 58.4 (OEt), 30.9 (3-CH<sub>2</sub>), 25.2 (4-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 13.7 (OEt);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +17.1; *m/z* (ESI) 915.32 (2M + Na, 20%) and 447.17 (M + H, 100).

#### Tetrahydropyran-containing ylides

**1-(Tetrahydropyran-4-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)ethanone 12.** Reaction using procedure A with methyltriphenylphosphonium bromide (9.61 g, 26.9 mmol) in THF (50 cm<sup>3</sup>), 2.5 M *n*-BuLi (11.17 cm<sup>3</sup>, 26.9 mmol) and tetrahydropyran-4-carbonyl chloride (2.00 g, 13.45 mmol) in THF (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (1.21 g, 23%) as pale orange crystals, mp 162–164 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 389.1659. C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>26</sub>O<sub>2</sub>P (M + H) requires 389.1670);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1540 (CO), 1400, 1110, 1082, 860, 752, and 697;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.70–7.60 (6 H, m), 7.60–7.50 (3 H, m), 7.50–7.40 (6 H, m), 4.10–3.95 (2 H, m), 3.70 (1 H, d, *J* 25.8, CH=P), 3.50–3.35 (2 H, m), 2.45–2.30 (1 H, m, 4-H) and 1.90–1.75 (4 H, m);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (100 MHz) 195.1 (d, *J* 1, CO), 132.9 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of Ph), 131.9 (d, *J* 1, C-4 of Ph), 128.8 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of Ph), 127.2 (d, *J* 90, C-1 of Ph), 68.1 (2,6-CH<sub>2</sub>), 49.2 (d, *J* 107, P=CH), 46.2 (d, *J* 14, 4-CH) and 30.8 (3,5-CH<sub>2</sub>);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +15.9; *m/z* (ESI) 389.17 (M + H, 100).

**1-(Tetrahydropyran-4-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)propan-1-one 13.** Reaction using procedure A with ethyltriphenylphosphonium bromide (5.00 g, 13.4 mmol) in THF (40 cm<sup>3</sup>), 2.5 M *n*-BuLi (5.40 cm<sup>3</sup>, 13.4 mmol) and tetrahydropyran-4-carbonyl chloride (1.00 g, 6.73 mmol) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (0.71 g, 26%) as yellow crystals, mp 183–185 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 403.1810. C<sub>26</sub>H<sub>28</sub>O<sub>2</sub>P (M + H) requires 403.1827);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1520 (CO), 1099, 856, 754, 716 and 697;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.60–7.35 (15 H, m), 4.10–3.95 (2 H, m), 3.50 (2 H, td, *J* 12, 3), 2.93 (1 H, tt, *J* 7.8, 3.9, 4-H), 1.95–1.80 (2 H, m), 1.66 (3 H, d, *J* 16.2, Me) and 1.66–1.55 (2 H, m);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (75 MHz) 191.2 (d, *J* 4, CO), 133.3 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of Ph), 131.2 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of Ph), 128.4 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of Ph), 128.0 (d, *J* 90, C-1 of Ph), 68.1 (2,6-CH<sub>2</sub>), 55.4 (d, *J* 106, P=C), 40.7 (d, *J* 10, 4-CH), 29.2 (3,5-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 12.7 (d, *J* 14, Me);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +16.8; *m/z* (ESI) 425.16 (M + Na, 12%) and 403.18 (M + H, 100).

**2-Phenyl-1-(tetrahydropyran-4-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)ethan-1-one 14.** Reaction using procedure A with benzyltriphenylphosphonium chloride (5.23 g, 13.4 mmol) in THF (20 cm<sup>3</sup>), 2.5 M *n*-BuLi (5.4 cm<sup>3</sup>, 13.46 mmol) and tetrahydropyran-4-carbonyl chloride (1.00 g, 6.73 mmol) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (0.20 g, 6%) as pale yellow crystals, mp 178–182 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 465.1962. C<sub>31</sub>H<sub>30</sub>O<sub>2</sub>P (M + H) requires 465.1983);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1520 (CO), 1124, 1105, 861, 756, 709 and 691;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.60–7.40 (9 H, m), 7.40–7.30 (6 H, m), 7.05–6.95 (5 H, m), 3.95–3.85 (2 H, m), 3.24 (2 H, td, *J* 12, 2), 2.74 (1 H, tt, *J* 11.4, 3.9, 4-H), 1.95–1.75 (2 H, m) and

1.55–1.48 (2 H, m);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (125 MHz) 191.4 (d, *J* 5, CO), 137.9 (d, *J* 13, C-1 of Ph), 134.8 (d, *J* 5, C-2 of Ph), 133.5 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of PPh), 131.2 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of PPh), 128.3 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of PPh), 127.6 (d, *J* 2, C-3 of Ph), 127.4 (d, *J* 90, C-1 of PPh), 125.1 (d, *J* 2, C-4 of Ph), 70.1 (d, *J* 108, P=C), 67.8 (2,6-CH<sub>2</sub>), 41.1 (d, *J* 9, 4-CH) and 29.6 (3,5-CH<sub>2</sub>);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +14.9; *m/z* (ESI) 951.37 (2M + Na, 18%), 487.18 (M + Na, 27%) and 465.20 (M + H, 100).

**Ethyl 3-oxo-3-(tetrahydropyran-4-yl)-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)propanoate 15.** Reaction using procedure B with ethyl triphenylphosphoranylideneacetate (2.34 g, 6.73 mmol), triethylamine (0.94 cm<sup>3</sup>, 0.68 g, 6.73 mmol) and tetrahydropyran-4-carbonyl chloride (0.89 g, 6.73 mmol) in toluene (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (2.05 g, 66%) as pale yellow crystals, mp 170–171 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 461.1867. C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>30</sub>O<sub>4</sub>P (M + H) requires 461.1882);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1657 (CO), 1556 (CO), 1291, 1107, 1080, 1063, 746 and 693;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.65–7.55 (6 H, m), 7.55–7.35 (9 H, m), 4.01–3.93 (2 H, m), 3.81 (1 H, tt, *J* 11.4, 3.9, 4-H), 3.70 (2 H, q, *J* 7.1, OEt), 3.54 (2 H, td, *J* 11.3, 3.0), 1.85–1.60 (4 H, m, 3,5-H) and 0.63 (3 H, t, *J* 7.1, OEt);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (100 MHz) 198.9 (d, *J* 5, 3-CO), 167.5 (d, *J* 15, 1-CO), 132.9 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of Ph), 131.5 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of Ph), 128.4 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of Ph), 126.9 (d, *J* 93, C-1 of Ph), 69.8 (d, *J* 109, P=C), 68.0 (2,6-CH<sub>2</sub>), 58.3 (OEt), 43.3 (d, *J* 7, 4-CH), 29.4 (3,5-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 13.7 (OEt);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +17.5; *m/z* (ESI) 943.35 (2M + Na, 32%), 483.17 (M + Na, 7%) and 461.19 (M + H, 100).

#### 1,3-Dioxolane-containing ylides

**1-(2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)-2-phenyl-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)ethan-1-one 16.** Reaction using procedure A with benzyltriphenylphosphonium chloride (3.31 g, 8.5 mmol) in THF (40 cm<sup>3</sup>), 2.5 M *n*-BuLi (3.4 cm<sup>3</sup>, 8.5 mmol) and 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane-4-carbonyl chloride (0.70 g, 4.25 mmol) in THF (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (0.51 g, 25%) as colourless crystals, mp 169–171 °C (from EtOAc) (Found 481.1914. C<sub>31</sub>H<sub>30</sub>O<sub>3</sub>P (M + H) requires 481.1933);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1717, 1549 (CO), 1523, 1103, 870, 761 and 694;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 7.60–7.40 (9 H, m), 7.40–7.30 (6 H, m), 7.00–6.95 (5 H, m), 4.75 (1 H, ddd, *J* 8.4, 6.9, 1.2), 3.895 (1 H, half AB pattern of d, *J* 7.5, 6.9), 3.86 (1 H, half AB pattern of d, *J* 8.4, 7.5), 1.41 (3 H, s, Me) and 1.31 (3 H, s, Me);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (75 MHz) 184.3 (d, *J* 6, CO), 136.5 (d, *J* 11, C-1 of Ph), 135.0 (d, *J* 5, C-2 of Ph), 133.6 (d, *J* 10, C-2 of PPh), 131.5 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of PPh), 128.4 (d, *J* 12, C-3 of PPh), 127.7 (d, *J* 2, C-3 of Ph), 126.3 (d, *J* 91, C-1 of PPh), 125.6 (d, *J* 3, C-4 of Ph), 109.7 (dioxolane C-2), 76.4 (d, *J* 13, dioxolane C-4), 71.0 (d, *J* 107, P=C), 68.0 (dioxolane C-5), 26.2 (Me) and 26.0 (Me);  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  (121 MHz) +16.1; *m/z* (ESI) 481.19 (M + H, 100).

**Ethyl 3-(2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)-3-oxo-2-(triphenylphosphoranylidene)propanoate 17.** Reaction using procedure B with ethyl triphenylphosphoranylideneacetate (1.47 g, 4.25 mmol), triethylamine (0.60 cm<sup>3</sup>, 0.43 g, 4.25 mmol) and 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-carbonyl chloride (0.70 g, 4.25 mmol) in toluene (10 cm<sup>3</sup>) gave the product (0.52 g, 26%) as colourless crystals, mp 154–156 °C (Found 477.1819. C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>30</sub>O<sub>5</sub>P (M + H) requires 477.1831);  $\nu_{\max}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  1655, 1597 (CO), 1300, 1288, 1104, 1088, 842, 756 and 689;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (500 MHz)



7.70–7.60 (6 H, m), 7.60–7.50 (3 H, m), 7.50–7.40 (6 H, m), 5.51 (1 H, ddd,  $J$  7.5, 5.4, 1.2), 4.57 (1 H, dd,  $J$  8.2, 7.5), 4.16 (1 H, dd,  $J$  8.2, 5.4), 3.74 and 3.66 (2 H, AB pattern of q,  $J$  10.5, 7.2), 1.39 (3 H, s, Me), 1.36 (3 H, s, Me) and 0.64 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.2, OEt);  $\delta_C$  (125 MHz) 193.2 (d,  $J$  3, 3-CO), 167.5 (d,  $J$  14, 1-CO), 133.1 (d,  $J$  10, C-2 of Ph), 131.6 (d,  $J$  3, C-4 of Ph), 128.5 (d,  $J$  12, C-3 of Ph), 126.1 (d,  $J$  94, C-1 of Ph), 109.9 (dioxolane C-2), 79.1 (d,  $J$  9, dioxolane C-4), 68.94 (d,  $J$  110, P=C), 68.89 (dioxolane C-5), 58.4 (OEt), 26.1 (Me), 25.7 (Me) and 13.6 (OEt);  $\delta_P$  (121 MHz) +16.9;  $m/z$  (ESI) 975.34 (2M + Na, 35%), 499.16 (M + Na, 60), 477.18 (M + H, 100).

### X-ray structure determination

Compound **10**,  $C_{31}H_{27}O_3P$ ,  $M$  478.53, yellow prism. Monoclinic, space group  $P2_1/c$ ,  $a$  9.9232(13),  $b$  21.836(2),  $c$  11.4086(13) Å,  $\beta$  96.272(4)°,  $V$  2457.3(5) Å<sup>3</sup>,  $Z$  4,  $D_c$  1.293 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>,  $T$  173 K, 26 295 reflections, 4506 unique ( $R_{int}$  0.048).  $R_1$  0.0484,  $wR_2$  0.1407,  $R$  indices based on 3994 data with  $I > 2\sigma(I)$ , 316 parameters. Data were recorded using a Rigaku XtaLB P200, Mo K $\alpha$  radiation (confocal optic,  $\lambda$  0.71073 Å) and Saturn detector. The structure was solved by direct methods and refined using full-matrix least-squares methods.

Compound **13**,  $C_{26}H_{27}O_2P$ ,  $M$  402.47, colourless prism. Monoclinic, space group  $P2_1/c$ ,  $a$  11.829(3),  $b$  11.011(3),  $c$  16.248(4) Å,  $\beta$  93.341(7)°,  $V$  2112.7(9) Å<sup>3</sup>,  $Z$  4,  $D_c$  1.265 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>,  $T$  93 K, 23 466 reflections, 3850 unique ( $R_{int}$  0.0592).  $R_1$  0.0369,  $wR_2$  0.1090,  $R$  indices based on 3336 data with  $I > 2\sigma(I)$ , 263 parameters. Data were recorded using a Rigaku XtaLB P200, Mo K $\alpha$  radiation (confocal optic,  $\lambda$  0.71073 Å) and Saturn detector. The structure was solved by direct methods and refined using full-matrix least-squares methods.

Compound **17**,  $C_{28}H_{29}O_5P$ ,  $M$  476.51, colourless prism. Triclinic, space group  $P1$ ,  $a$  9.345(4),  $b$  10.512(3),  $c$  14.341(4) Å,  $\alpha$  98.497(2),  $\beta$  106.816(11),  $\gamma$  110.513(8)°,  $V$  1213.3(7) Å<sup>3</sup>,  $Z$  2,  $D_c$  1.304 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>,  $T$  125 K, 13 591 reflections, 6259 unique ( $R_{int}$  0.0836).  $R_1$  0.0570,  $wR_2$  0.1352,  $R$  indices based on 5802 data with  $I > 2\sigma(I)$ , 619 parameters. Data were recorded using a Rigaku XtaLB P200, Cu K $\alpha$  radiation (confocal optic,  $\lambda$  1.54187 Å) and Saturn detector. The structure was solved by direct methods and refined using full-matrix least-squares methods.

Crystallographic data (excluding structure factors) for the structures included in this paper have been deposited at the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre as supplementary publication No. CCDC 1435297 (**10**), 1435298 (**13**) and 1435299 (**17**).

### Flash vacuum pyrolysis (FVP)

This was carried out using the apparatus previously described.<sup>22</sup> The contact time in the hot zone was estimated to be ~10 ms. In each case a solid collected at the furnace exit which was found to be either Ph<sub>3</sub>PO or a mixture of Ph<sub>3</sub>PO and Ph<sub>3</sub>P. In the cold trap the other product(s) collected as a liquid or oil and this was dissolved out using either CDCl<sub>3</sub> (small scale) for direct NMR analysis, or CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (large scale) for purification and characterisation by the usual methods.

**FVP of ylide 6** (150 mg) at 750 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2, and in the cold trap:

**2-Ethynyltetrahydrofuran 18** (14 mg, 36%) as a colourless liquid (Found 95.0493.  $C_6H_7O$  (M – H) requires 95.0497);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 4.62–4.58 (1 H, m, 2-H), 4.00–3.92 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.86–3.75 (1 H, m, 5-H), 2.43 (1 H, d,  $J$  2.0, =CH) and 2.24–1.85 (m, 4H, 3,4-H);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 83.8 (C, –C≡), 72.5 (CH, –C≡), 67.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>, C-5), 67.8 (CH, C-2), 33.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>).

**FVP of ylide 12** (110 mg) at 750 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2, and in the cold trap:

A mixture containing **4-ethynyltetrahydropyran 19** (13 mg, 42%) as a colourless liquid (Found: 111.0812.  $C_7H_{11}O$  (M + H) requires 111.0810);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  3293 (=C–H), 2240 (C≡C), 1262, 1090, 1058 and 813;  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz) 3.905 (2 H, ddd,  $J$  11.6, 5.6, 3.6, 2,6-H), 3.505 (2 H, ddd,  $J$  11.6, 8.4, 3.2, 2,6-H), 2.68–2.61 (1 H, m, 4-H), 2.11 (1 H, d,  $J$  2.4, =CH), 1.88–1.80 (2 H, m, 3,5-H) and 1.74–1.64 (2 H, m, 3,5-H);  $\delta_C$  (100 MHz) 86.6 (C, –C≡), 69.1 (CH, –C≡), 66.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.9 (CH), together with cyclopentadiene (4%);  $\delta_H$  6.57 (2 H, m), 6.47 (2 H, m) and 2.99 (2 H, m);  $\delta_C$  133.1 (CH), 132.2 (CH) and 41.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and acetaldehyde (3%);  $\delta_H$  9.79 (1 H, q,  $J$  3) and 2.21 (3 H, d,  $J$  3).

**FVP of ylide 7** (200 mg) at 730 °C gave at the furnace exit a 2 : 1 mixture of Ph<sub>3</sub>P;  $\delta_P$  –5.5 and Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2, and in the cold trap:

A colourless liquid consisting of a mixture of **2-(prop-1-ynyl)tetrahydrofuran 22** (20%);  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz) 4.58–4.50 (1 H, m, 2-H), 3.98–3.85 (2 H, m, 5-H), 1.90–1.80 (2 H, m), 1.75–1.70 (2 H, m) and 1.84 (3 H, d,  $J$  1.8);  $\delta_C$  (100 MHz) 79.0 (C, –C≡), 70.7 (C, –C≡), 68.3 (CH), 67.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 33.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 25.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 3.5 (Me) [good agreement of  $\delta_H$  with lit.<sup>40</sup>] and **2-(prop-1-ynyl)-4,5-dihydrofuran 24** (30%) (Found 127.0754.  $C_7H_{11}O_2$  (M + H) requires 127.0759);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 5.94 (1 H, t,  $J$  3.0), 4.47 (2 H, t,  $J$  9.8), 2.82 (2 H, td, 9.8, 3.0), 2.65 (2 H, q,  $J$  7.2) and 1.12 (3 H, t,  $J$  7.2);  $\delta_C$  (100 MHz) 193.0 (CO), 156.0 (=C–), 110.7 (=CH–), 70.1 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 32.0 (COCH<sub>2</sub>), 30.5 (4-CH<sub>2</sub>) and 8.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>). Preparative TLC allowed separation of the latter in pure form.

**FVP of ylide 13** (70 mg) at 710 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2, and in the cold trap:

**4-(Prop-1-ynyl)tetrahydropyran 25** (65%) (Found: 125.0969.  $C_8H_{13}O$  (M + H) requires 125.0966);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  2233 (C≡C);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 3.89 (2 H, ddd,  $J$  11.7, 5.1, 3.9, 2,6-H), 3.47 (2 H, ddd,  $J$  11.7, 8.7, 2.8, 2,6-H), 2.60–2.50 (1 H, m, 4-H), 1.81 (3 H, d,  $J$  2.0) 1.82–1.74 (2 H, m, 3,5-H) and 1.68–1.55 (2 H, m, 3,5-H);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 81.7 (C, –C≡), 76.4 (C, –C≡), 66.5 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 26.3 (CH) and 3.5 (Me).

**FVP of ylide 8** (80 mg) at 700 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2, and in the cold trap:

**2-(Phenylethynyl)tetrahydrofuran 26** (56%) as a colourless liquid (Found 195.0776.  $C_{12}H_{12}ONa$  (M + Na) requires 195.0786);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  2231 (C≡C), 1727, 1599, 1490, 1054, 757 and 692;  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 7.6–7.2 (5 H, m), 4.81 (1 H, dd,  $J$  7.2, 5.0, 2-H), 4.05–3.98 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.89–3.82 (1 H, m, 5-H), 2.25–2.15 (1 H, m), 2.15–2.00 (2 H, m) and 2.00–1.85 (1 H, m);



$\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 131.7 (2 CH), 128.22 (CH), 128.17 (2 CH), 122.8 (C), 89.0 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 84.4 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 68.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 67.9 (CH), 33.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.5 (CH<sub>2</sub>) [good agreement of  $\delta_H$ <sup>27</sup> and  $\delta_C$ <sup>28</sup> with lit.].

**FVP of ylide 14** (70 mg) at 700 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2, and in the cold trap:

A mixture of **4-(phenylethynyl)tetrahydropyran 27** (46%) (Found 186.1042. C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>14</sub>O (M) requires 186.1045);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 7.45–7.25 (5 H, m), 4.00–3.89 (2 H, m, 2,6-H), 3.60–3.50 (2 H, m, 2,6-H), 2.90–2.80 (1 H, m, 4-H), 1.95–1.85 (2 H, m, 3,5-H) and 1.82–1.70 (2 H, m, 3,5-H);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 131.6 (2 CH), 128.2 (2 CH), 126.6 (CH), 123.6 (C), 92.2 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 81.5 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 66.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 26.8 (CH), and **4-(phenylvinylidene)tetrahydropyran 28** (20%);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 7.45–7.25 (5 H, m), 6.10 (1 H, quintet, *J* 2.1), 3.89–3.75 (2 H, m, 2,6-H), 2.38–2.33 (2 H, m, 3,5-H);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 200.7 ( $=C=$ ), 135.2 (C), 128.6 (2 CH), 127.7 (2 CH), 126.7 (CH), 101.9 ( $=C<$ ), 93.7 ( $=CH$ ), 68.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 31.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>).

**FVP of ylide 16** (65 mg) at 650 °C gave at the furnace exit an 8 : 1 mixture of Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and Ph<sub>3</sub>P;  $\delta_P$  –5.5, and in the cold trap:

**4-Phenylethynyl-2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane 29** (48%) (Found 225.0883. C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>14</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na (M + Na) requires 225.0891);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  2234, 2212 (C $\equiv$ C), 1709, 1680, 1599, 1491, 1065, 758 and 692;  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 7.48–7.40 (2 H, m), 7.35–7.25 (3 H, m), 4.95 (1 H, t, *J* 6.3, 4-H), 4.24 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.0, 6.3, 5-H), 4.01 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.0, 6.3, 5-H), 1.54 (3 H, q, *J* 0.6) and 1.43 (3 H, q, *J* 0.6);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 131.7 (2 C), 128.6 (C-4 of Ph), 128.2 (2 C), 122.2 (C-1 of Ph), 110.3 (dioxolane C-2), 86.2 ( $-C\equiv$ ), 85.8 ( $-C\equiv$ ), 70.0 (dioxolane C-5), 66.0 (dioxolane C-4), 26.2 and 26.0 (CMe<sub>2</sub>) [good agreement of  $\delta_H$  and  $\delta_C$  with lit.<sup>27</sup>]. Acetone (20%);  $\delta_H$  2.17;  $\delta_C$  207.0 and 30.9, was also present.

**FVP of ylide 16** (107 mg) at 750 °C gave at the furnace exit a 3 : 1 mixture of Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and Ph<sub>3</sub>P;  $\delta_P$  –5.5, and in the cold trap a mixture of **29** (data as above), acetone, and:

**2-Phenyloxete 30** (Found 133.0649. C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>9</sub>O (M + H) requires 133.0653);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 6.16 (1 H, t, *J* 6.9) and 5.14 (2 H, d, *J* 6.9);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 93.9 (CH) and 78.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>). Due to peak overlap the phenyl and quaternary  $=C-$  signals could not be observed with certainty.

**FVP of ylide 9** (70 mg) at 500 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap a mixture of:

**1-(Tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)but-2-yn-1-one 37** (26%);  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz) 4.44 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.6, 5.8), 3.95–3.80 (2 H, m), 2.30–2.00 (4 H, m) and 2.07 (3 H, s);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 188.8 (CO), 93.7 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 83.7 (CH), 78.3 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 69.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 29.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 25.25 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 4.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>) and **4-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)but-3-yn-2-one 39** (58%);  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz) 4.74 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.0, 4.8), 4.1–3.9 (2 H, m), 2.2–1.8 (4 H, m) and 2.35 (3 H, s);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 184.3 (CO), 91.0 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 83.5 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 68.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 67.6 (CH), 32.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>) and 25.34 (CH<sub>2</sub>).

**FVP of ylide 9** (110 mg) at 700 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap a mixture of **37** (18%), **39** (33%) data as above, and:

**3-Acetylfuran 41** (17%);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 8.03 (1 H, dd, *J* 1.5, 0.9), 7.45 (1 H, dd, *J* 2.0, 1.5), 6.77 (1 H, dd, *J* 2.0, 0.9) and 2.45 (3 H, s);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 192.6 (CO), 147.5 (CH), 144.2 (CH), 128.0 (C), 108.5 (CH) and 27.8 (CH<sub>3</sub>) [good agreement of  $\delta_H$  and  $\delta_C$  with lit.<sup>36</sup>].

**FVP of ylide 10** (70 mg) at 500 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap:

A mixture of **3-phenyl-1-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)prop-2-yn-1-one 38** (29%);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 7.65–7.35 (5 H, m), 4.58 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.7, 5.7), 4.14–3.85 (2 H, m) and 2.40–1.90 (4 H, m);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 83.9 (CH), 69.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 29.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>) [due to low intensity and peak overlap, the signals for CO,  $-C\equiv$  and Ph could not be assigned with certainty] and **1-phenyl-3-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)prop-2-yn-1-one 40** (30%);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 7.65–7.35 (5 H, m), 4.89 (1 H, dd, *J* 7.8, 4.8), 4.14–3.85 (2 H, m) and 2.40–1.90 (4 H, m);  $\delta_C$  (75 MHz) 68.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 67.9 (CH), 32.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 25.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>) [due to low intensity and peak overlap, the signals for CO,  $-C\equiv$  and Ph could not be assigned with certainty]. Aromatic CH signals for **38** and **40** were at 134.2, 133.2, 130.9, 129.6, 128.63 and 128.58.

**FVP of ylide 10** (50 mg) at 700 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap a mixture of **38** (12%), **40** (14%) data as above, and:

**3-Benzoylfuran 42** (37%);  $\delta_H$  (300 MHz) 7.93 (1 H, dd, *J* 1.5, 0.9), 7.87–7.82 (2 H, m), 7.62–7.56 (1 H, m), 7.51 (1 H, dd, *J* 1.8, 1.5), 7.50–7.46 (2 H, m) and 6.92 (1 H, dd, *J* 1.8, 0.9) [good agreement of  $\delta_H$  with lit.<sup>37</sup>].

**FVP of ylide 11** (120 mg) at 500 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap a mixture of:

**Ethyl 3-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)propynoate 45** (42%) (Found 167.0703. C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>11</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (M – H) requires 167.0708);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  2239 (C $\equiv$ C), 1717, 1368, 1254, 1052, 1031, 860 and 752;  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz) 4.73 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.0, 4.0, 2-H), 4.23 (2 H, q, *J* 7.0), 3.99–3.92 (1 H, m, 5-H), 3.89–3.80 (1 H, m, 5-H), 2.30–2.20 (1 H, m, 4-H), 2.20–2.00 (2 H, m), 2.00–1.85 (1 H, m) and 1.31 (3 H, t, *J* 7.0);  $\delta_C$  (100 MHz) 153.3 (CO), 86.9 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 76.1 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 68.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 67.5 (CH), 62.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 25.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>) and 13.9 (CH<sub>3</sub>) and **2-ethynyltetrahydrofuran 18** (16%), data as for FVP of **6**.

**FVP of ylide 11** (120 mg) at 750 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap a mixture containing low yields of furan, cyclopentadiene and acetaldehyde.

**FVP of ylide 15** (100 mg) at 500 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap:

**Ethyl 3-(tetrahydropyran-4-yl)propynoate 46** (60%) (Found 205.0830. C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>14</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na (M + Na) requires 205.0841);  $\nu_{max}/cm^{-1}$  2239 (C $\equiv$ C), 1712, 1260, 1250, 1095, 1021 and 747;  $\delta_H$  (500 MHz) 4.23 (2 H, q, *J* 7.0), 3.90 (2 H, ddd, *J* 11.6, 5.6, 3.6, 2,6-H), 3.51 (2 H, ddd, *J* 11.8, 8.8, 3.0, 2,6-H), 2.81–2.75 (1 H, m, 4-H), 1.91–1.84 (2 H, m, 3,5-H), 1.79–1.71 (2 H, m, 3,5-H) and 1.32 (3 H, t, *J* 7.0);  $\delta_C$  (125 MHz) 153.8 (CO), 90.3 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 73.8 (C,  $-C\equiv$ ), 66.1 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 62.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 31.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 26.1 (CH) and 14.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>).

**FVP of ylide 15** (100 mg) at 750 °C gave at the furnace exit Ph<sub>3</sub>PO;  $\delta_P$  +29.2 and in the cold trap **4-ethynyltetrahydropyran**



19 (30%) together with cyclopentadiene (20%) and acetaldehyde (25%); data as for FVP of 12.

FVP of ylide 17 (130 mg) at 600 °C gave at the furnace exit  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  +29.2 and in the cold trap:

A mixture of ethyl 3-(2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)propynoate 47 (68%) (Found 221.0782.  $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{14}\text{O}_4\text{Na}$  (M + Na) requires 221.0790);  $\nu_{\text{max}}/\text{cm}^{-1}$  2244 (C≡C), 1716 (C=O), 1374, 1248, 1067 and 846;  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 4.82 (1 H, dd, *J* 6.6, 5.6, 4-H), 4.24 (2 H, q, *J* 7.2), 4.21 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.4, 6.6, 5-H), 4.05 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.4, 5.6, 5-H), 1.50 (3 H, q, *J* 0.6), 1.39 (3 H, q, *J* 0.6) and 1.31 (3 H, t, *J* 7.2);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (75 MHz) 153.0 (CO), 111.2 (dioxolane C-2), 84.2 (C≡), 77.0 (C≡), 69.2 (dioxolane C-5), 64.9 (dioxolane C-4), 62.2 ( $\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ), 26.0 and 25.7 ( $\text{CMe}_2$ ) and 13.9 ( $\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ) and 4-ethynyl-2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane 48 (9%) (Found 125.0602.  $\text{C}_7\text{H}_9\text{O}_2$  (M - H) requires 125.0603);  $\delta_{\text{H}}$  (300 MHz) 4.72 (1 H, td, *J* 6.3, 2.1, 4-H), 4.18 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.1, 6.3, 5-H), 3.95 (1 H, dd, *J* 8.1, 6.3, 5-H), 2.51 (1 H, d, *J* 2.1, ≡CH), 1.50 (3 H, q, *J* 0.6) and 1.39 (3 H, q, *J* 0.6);  $\delta_{\text{C}}$  (75 MHz) 110.5 (dioxolane C-2), 85.4 (C≡), 73.9 (HC≡), 69.8 (dioxolane C-5), 65.2 (dioxolane C-4), 26.1 and 25.8 ( $\text{CMe}_2$ ).

FVP of ylide 17 (120 mg) at 650 °C gave at the furnace exit  $\text{Ph}_3\text{PO}$ ;  $\delta_{\text{P}}$  +29.2 and in the cold trap a mixture of 47 (39%) and 48 (30%), data as above.

## Conclusions

Our results show that the tetrahydrofuran, tetrahydropyran and 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane rings are generally stable under the conditions required for alkyne formation using the FVP of stabilised phosphonium ylides. Increasing the pyrolysis temperature does lead to observation of new, largely carbene-based, processes in some cases but provided the temperature is carefully controlled the use of this method to construct acetylenic carbohydrate derivatives should be possible and further results on this will be reported shortly.

## Notes and references

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