

## Supporting information

### Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub>-catalysed intramolecular cyclisation of unsaturated acetals

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## 1. General experimental conditions

All commercially available chemicals were used without further purification. Moisture sensitive reactions were performed under nitrogen.  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  and  $\text{MeNO}_2$  were dried with 4 Å molecular sieves.

GC analysis were performed on an Agilent Technologies 6980N, with an Agilent Technologies HP5 (30 m x 250  $\mu\text{m}$ ) column. It is equipped with a FID detector and uses hydrogen as carrier gas.

GC-MS analysis were performed on an Agilent Technologies 7890N, equipped with a Mass Agilent technologies 5975C VL MSD detector using hydrogen as carrier gas. Equipped with a polar Agilent Technologies HP-Innowax (20 m x 180  $\mu\text{m}$ ) and an apolar Agilent Technologies DB-1MS UI (20 m x 180  $\mu\text{m}$ ) column.

High resolution mass spectra were determined on a GC-QTOF 7200 Accurate Mass.

$^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra were obtained on Bruker 300 MHz and 500 MHz FT-NMR spectrometers.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectra were recorded at 75 MHz and 126 MHz. Multiplicity is indicated as follows: s (singlet); bs (broad singlet); d (doublet); t (triplet); q (quartet); m (multiplet); dd (doublet of doublets), etc...

Flash chromatography was performed with a Teledyne Isco Combiflash Rf+ Lumen™ using RediSep Rf Gold columns.

Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on precoated glass-backed plates (Merck Kieselgel 60 F254), and components were visualized by observation under UV light or by treating the plates with  $\text{KMnO}_4/\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  followed by heating.

## 2. Synthesis of the starting materials

Compounds **1a-1i** were obtained via a first allylation procedure **A**, followed by an alkylation procedure **B** (for **1a, 1b, 1d-1g, 1i**), or **C** (for **1c, 1h**).

**General procedure A for the allylation of malonates:** A solution of NaOMe (2.472 kg, 13.72 mol, 30% wt in MeOH) and KI (12 g, 74 mmol) were added in MeOH (6 L) at 25 °C and treated dropwise with a solution of dimethyl malonate (1.95 kg, 14.76 mol). The reaction was stirred at 25 °C for 30 min. The corresponding allyl bromide or chloride (14.76 mol) was then added dropwise. After 18 hours at 25 °C, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure before adding an aqueous solution of HCl 10% until pH = 1. The organic layer was separated from the aqueous phase. The aqueous phase was extracted with methyl *t*-butyl ether (MTBE, 2 x 300 mL). The combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and the solvent removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by distillation.

**Dimethyl 2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate:** allylation with 1-bromo-3-methylbut-2-ene (2.2 kg, 14.76 mol); distillation at 74 °C under 0.4 Torr. Yellowish liquid (2.1 kg, 10.49 mol, 71%). **<sup>1</sup>H-NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ [ppm] 5.11 – 4.99 (m, 1H), 3.74 (s, 6H), 3.37 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 2.60 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 1.69 (d, *J* = 1.4 Hz, 3H), 1.63 (s, 3H). **<sup>13</sup>C-NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ [ppm] 169.62 (2C), 135.14, 119.43, 52.50, 52.41, 51.90, 27.61, 25.77, 17.70. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 955, 1733, 1240, 1147 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>16</sub>O<sub>4</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 200.1049, found 200.1046.

**Dimethyl-2-methallyl malonate** (Propanedioic acid, 2-(2-methyl-2-propen-1-yl)-, 1,3-dimethyl ester): reaction on a 1.045 mol scale with methallyl chloride (18 h, 25 °C); distillation at 82 °C under 0.4 Torr as a colorless liquid (127 g, 0.683 mol, 65%). **<sup>1</sup>H-NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ [ppm] 4.78 (s, 1H), 4.71 (s, 1H), 3.73 (m, 6H), 3.61 (t, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 2.61 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 1.73 (s, 3H). **<sup>13</sup>C-NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ [ppm] 169.44 (2C), 141.55, 112.31, 52.52, 52.49, 50.26, 36.52, 22.21. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 2955, 1733, 1651, 1226, 1149, 896 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>14</sub>O<sub>4</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 186.0892, found 186.0887.

**Dimethyl-2-cinnamyl malonate:** reaction on a 1.309 mol with cinnamyl chloride (4 h, 25 °C); distillation at 141 °C under 0.5 Torr as a colorless liquid (177 g, 0.713 mol, 54%). **<sup>1</sup>H-NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ [ppm] 7.38 – 7.19 (m, 5H), 6.50 (d, *J* = 15.8, 1H), 6.16 (dt, *J* = 15.8, 7.2 Hz, 1H), 3.76 (s, 6H), 3.55 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 2.83 (td, *J* = 7.3, 1.4 Hz, 2H). **<sup>13</sup>C-NMR** (0 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ [ppm] 169.26 (2C), 136.98, 132.93, 128.51, 127.43, 126.21, 125.35, 52.60 (2C), 51.74, 32.27. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 3026, 2953, 1732, 1598, 1227, 1150, 744, 693 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>16</sub>O<sub>4</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 248.1049, found 248.1050.

**General procedure B for the alkylation of allylated malonates:** A solution of the allylated malonate (115 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of NaOMe (23 mL, 121 mmol, 30% wt in MeOH) and KI (572 mg, 3.45 mmol) in MeOH (15 mL) at 25 °C. The mixture was stirred at 25 °C for 30 min. The corresponding bromoacetal (148 mmol) was then added dropwise. After 19 hours at reflux, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure before adding a saturated aqueous bicarbonate solution. The organic phase was extracted with MTBE (2 x 50 mL). The combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by distillation.

**Dimethyl 2-(2,2-dimethoxyethyl)-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate, 1a:** alkylation of dimethyl 2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate (100 g, 499 mmol) with 2-bromo-1,1-dimethoxyethane (100 g, 589 mmol). Distillation at 120 °C under 0.8 Torr. Colorless liquid (46.7 g, 162 mmol, 32%). **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 4.99 – 4.89 (m, 1H), 4.45 (td, *J* = 5.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 3.74 – 3.67 (m, 6H), 3.30 (m, 6H), 2.66

(d,  $J = 7.5, 1.0$  Hz, 2H), 2.20 (dd,  $J = 5.6, 1.2$  Hz, 2H), 1.70 (s, 3H), 1.62 (s, 3H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  171.71 (2C), 136.01, 117.38, 101.99, 55.30, 53.56, 53.54, 52.36, 52.33, 35.89, 32.03, 26.02, 17.88. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2835, 1736, 1676, 1233, 1217, 1181, 852  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{21}\text{O}_5^+$  [ $\text{M}^+$ -OMe] 257.1384, found 257.1363.

**Dimethyl 2-(3,3-dimethoxypropyl)-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate, 1b:** alkylation of dimethyl 2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate (23 g, 115 mmol) with 3-bromo-1,1-dimethoxypropane (25 g, 137 mmol). Distillation at 110 °C under 0.4 Torr. Colorless liquid (16 g, 52.9 mmol, 46%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  5.01 – 4.87 (m, 1H), 4.34 (t,  $J = 5.7$  Hz, 1H), 3.71 (s, 6H), 3.29 (s, 6H), 2.61 (d, 2H), 1.97 – 1.84 (m, 2H), 1.69 (s, 3H), 1.61 (s, 3H), 1.56 – 1.41 (m, 2H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  171.85 (2C), 135.64, 117.47, 104.15, 57.26, 52.55, 52.52, 52.32, 52.29, 31.46, 27.50, 27.34, 25.97, 17.84. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 3473, 2833, 1735, 1676, 1276, 1225, 852  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_6$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 302.1729, found 302.1693.

**Dimethyl 2-(2,2-dimethoxyethyl)-2-(2-methylallyl)malonate, 1d:** alkylation of dimethyl-2-methylallyl malonate (23 g, 124 mmol) with 2-bromo-1,1-dimethoxyethane (25 g, 148 mmol). Distillation at 107 °C under 0.6 Torr. Colorless liquid (8 g, 29.2 mmol, 24%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  4.89 and 4.75 (m, 2H), 4.49 (t,  $J = 5.5$  Hz, 1H), 3.71 (s, 6H), 3.29 (s, 6H), 2.76 (s, 2H), 2.21 (d,  $J = 5.5$  Hz, 2H), 1.64 (s, 3H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  171.74 (2C), 140.28, 116.04, 101.87, 54.41, 53.58, 53.56, 52.40, 52.38, 41.22, 36.07, 23.00. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2832, 1727, 1285, 1178, 1104, 908  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{20}\text{O}_5^+$  [ $\text{M}^+$ -OMe] 243.1227, found 243.1209

**Diisopropyl 2-(2,2-dimethoxyethyl)-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate, 1e:** alkylation of diisopropyl 2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate (20 g, 78 mmol) with 2-bromo-1,1-dimethoxyethane (15.8 g, 94 mmol). Distillation at 120 °C under 0.4 Torr. Colorless liquid (11 g, 31.9 mmol, 41%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  5.11 – 4.87 (m, 3H), 4.45 – 4.34 (m, 1H), 3.34 – 3.22 (m, 6H), 2.63 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 2H), 2.23 – 2.13 (m, 2H), 1.71 – 1.58 (m, 6H), 1.24 – 1.18 (m, 12H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  170.70 (2C), 135.14, 117.85, 102.04, 68.54 (2C), 55.10, 53.23 (2C), 35.17, 31.29, 25.96, 21.54 (2C), 21.47 (2C), 18.03. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2832, 1726, 1285, 1178, 1104, 908  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{29}\text{O}_5^+$  [ $\text{M}^+$ -OMe] 313.2010, found 313.1982.

**Dimethyl 2-cinnamyl-2-(2,2-dimethoxyethyl)malonate, 1f:** alkylation of dimethyl-2-cinnamyl malonate (30 g, 121 mmol) with 2-bromo-1,1-dimethoxyethane (24.5 g, 145 mmol). Distillation at 140 °C under 0.1 Torr. Colorless liquid (8.5 g, 25.3 mmol, 21%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.47 – 7.18 (m, 5H), 6.46 (d,  $J = 15.7, 1.4$  Hz, 1H), 6.02 (dt,  $J = 15.7, 7.5$  Hz, 1H), 4.52 (t,  $J = 5.3$  Hz, 1H), 3.74 (s, 6H), 3.32 (s, 6H), 2.86 (dd,  $J = 7.5, 1.4$  Hz, 2H), 2.27 (d,  $J = 5.4$  Hz, 2H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  171.35 (2C), 136.95, 134.26, 128.56, 128.50, 127.49, 126.28, 126.23, 123.68, 101.96, 55.64, 53.68 (2C), 52.48 (2C), 37.23, 36.24. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2833, 1731, 1598, 1178, 740, 693  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{24}\text{O}_6$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 336.1573, found 336.1568.

**Dimethyl 2-cinnamyl-2-(3,3-dimethoxypropyl)malonate, 1g:** alkylation of dimethyl-2-cinnamyl malonate (28 g, 113 mmol) with 3-bromo-1,1-dimethoxypropane (24.8 g, 135 mmol). Distillation at 167 °C under 0.1 Torr. Colorless liquid (18.2 g, 51.9 mmol, 46%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.36 – 7.19 (m, 5H), 6.46 (d,  $J = 15.7$  Hz, 1H), 6.04 (dt,  $J = 15.7, 7.5$  Hz, 1H), 4.36 (t,  $J = 5.6$  Hz, 1H), 3.74 (s, 6H), 3.31 (s, 6H), 2.81 (d,  $J = 7.5$  Hz, 2H), 2.03 – 1.93 (m, 2H), 1.62 – 1.53 (m, 2H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  171.53 (2C), 137.03, 133.97, 128.48 (2C), 127.42, 126.22 (2C), 123.81, 104.08, 57.57, 52.66 (2C),

52.49 (2C), 36.76, 27.89, 27.31. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2831, 1730, 1598, 1194, 1053, 741, 693  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI+) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_6$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 350.1729, found 350.1738.

**Dimethyl 2-(3,3-dimethoxypropyl)-2-(2-methylallyl)malonate, 1i:** alkylation of dimethyl-2-methylallyl malonate (21 g, 113 mmol) with 3-bromo-1,1-dimethoxypropane (24.6 g, 134 mmol). Distillation at 116 °C under 0.5 Torr. Colorless liquid (10 g, 34.7 mmol, 31%).  **$^1\text{H}$  NMR** (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  4.86 and 4.74 (m, 2H), 4.32 (t,  $J = 5.7$  Hz, 1H), 3.72 (s, 6H), 3.29 (s, 6H), 2.70 (s, 2H), 2.01 – 1.88 (m, 2H), 1.64 (s, 3H), 1.58 – 1.41 (m, 2H).  **$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR** (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  171.86 (2C), 140.42, 115.68, 104.21, 56.70, 52.66 (2C), 52.40, 52.38, 40.60, 27.58, 27.46, 23.04. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2832, 1731, 1644, 1195, 1055, 896  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI+) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{24}\text{O}_6$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 288.1573, found 288.1564.

**General procedure for the alkylation by but-3-ene-2-one and further acetalisation:** The corresponding allylated malonate (499 mmol) and DBU (38 g, 250 mmol) were added in toluene (100 mL). But-3-ene-2-one (42 g, 599 mmol) was then added dropwise at 20 °C. After 30 minutes, the reaction was quenched with an aqueous solution of HCl 10% (50 mL) and extracted with MTBE (50 mL). The organic layer was washed with  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (50 mL), dried over magnesium sulfate and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by distillation. For the acetalisation, trimethoxymethane (11,78 g, 111 mmol) and PTSA. $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (127 mg, 667.67  $\mu\text{mol}$ ) were added in methanol (22 mL). The corresponding dialkylated malonate (111 mmol) was then added dropwise at 20 °C. After 3 hours, the reaction was quenched by adding sodium methanolate (300 mg, 5.55 mmol) in the mixture. Stirred for 5 minutes and then filtered off. The solvent was then removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by distillation.

**Dimethyl 2-(3,3-dimethoxybutyl)-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate, 1c:** Preparation of dimethyl 2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)-2-(3-oxobutyl)malonate, **6:** alkylation of dimethyl 2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malonate (100 g, 499 mmol) with DBU (38 g, 250 mmol) and but-3-ene-2-one (42 g, 599 mmol). Distillation at 139 °C under 0.7 Torr. Colorless oil (117 g, 433 mmol, 87%).  **$^1\text{H}$  NMR** (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  4.99 – 4.85 (m, 1H), 3.69 (s, 6H), 2.58 (d,  $J = 7.5$  Hz, 2H), 2.48 – 2.37 (m, 2H), 2.16 – 2.05 (m, 5H), 1.67 (s, 3H), 1.60 (s, 3H).  **$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR** (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  207.36, 207.34, 171.69, 135.97, 117.25, 56.91, 52.38, 52.36, 38.74, 32.28, 29.89, 26.47, 25.98, 17.85. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 3470, 2863, 1730, 1677, 1199, 1093  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI+) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{22}\text{O}_5$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 270.1467, found 270.1472. Acetalisation of dimethyl 2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)-2-(3-oxobutyl)malonate, **6** (30 g, 111 mmol) with trimethoxymethane (11,78 g, 111 mmol) and PTSA. $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (127 mg, 667.67  $\mu\text{mol}$ ). Distillation at 120 °C under 0.5 Torr. Colorless liquid (23 g, 72.7 mmol, 66%).  **$^1\text{H}$  NMR** (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  4.99 – 4.86 (m, 1H), 3.68 (s, 6H), 3.12 (s, 6H), 2.58 (d,  $J = 7.5$  Hz, 2H), 1.94 – 1.79 (m, 2H), 1.66 (s, 3H), 1.59 (s, 3H), 1.51 – 1.39 (m, 2H), 1.23 (s, 3H).  **$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR** (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  171.86 (2C), 135.55, 117.51, 101.31, 57.26, 52.29 (2C), 47.91 (2C), 31.34, 30.86, 27.04, 25.96, 20.76, 17.86. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2823, 1732, 1208, 1052, 850  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI+) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{25}\text{O}_6$  [ $\text{M}^+\text{-Me}$ ] 301.1646, found 301.1652.

**Dimethyl 2-cinnamyl-2-(3,3-dimethoxybutyl)malonate, 1h:** Preparation of dimethyl 2-cinnamyl-2-(3-oxobutyl)malonate: alkylation of dimethyl 2-cinnamylmalonate (30 g, 121 mmol) with DBU (4.6 g, 30 mmol) and but-3-ene-2-one (18.1 g, 258 mmol). Distillation at 186 °C under 0.1 Torr. Colorless oil (29 g, 91 mmol, 75%).  **$^1\text{H}$  NMR** (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.51 – 7.07 (m, 5H), 6.55 – 6.35 (m, 1H), 6.14 – 5.93 (m, 1H), 3.74 (s, 6H), 2.90 – 2.72 (m, 2H), 2.60 – 2.43 (m, 2H), 2.30 – 2.08 (m, 5H).  **$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR** (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  207.16, 171.36 (2C), 136.89, 134.16, 128.51 (2C), 127.52, 126.24 (2C), 123.54, 57.21, 52.55, 52.51, 38.68, 37.65, 29.93, 26.90. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 3028, 1733, 1270, 1182, 748, 696  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI+)

calcd. for  $C_{18}H_{22}O_5$  [ $M^+$ ] 318.1467, found 318.1467. Acetalisation of dimethyl 2-cinnamyl-2-(3-oxobutyl)malonate (13 g, 40.8 mmol) with trimethoxymethane (4.33 g, 40.8 mmol) and PTSA.H<sub>2</sub>O (78 mg, 408  $\mu$ mol). Distillation at 157 °C under 0.11 Torr. Colorless oil (5.5 g, 15.09 mmol, 37%). **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.36 – 7.28 (m, 4H), 7.26 – 7.18 (m, 1H), 6.47 (dt,  $J$  = 15.7, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 6.03 (dt,  $J$  = 15.7, 7.5 Hz, 1H), 3.74 (s, 6H), 3.16 (s, 6H), 2.82 (dd,  $J$  = 7.5, 1.2 Hz, 2H), 2.03 – 1.90 (m, 2H), 1.63 – 1.48 (m, 2H), 1.26 (s, 3H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  171.54 (2C), 137.01, 133.97, 128.50 (2C), 127.43, 126.19 (2C), 123.86, 101.33, 57.55, 52.48 (2C), 48.03 (2C), 36.63, 30.79, 27.47, 20.85. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2829, 1731, 1598, 1210, 1051, 850, 742, 693 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for  $C_{19}H_{23}O_5^+$  [ $M^+$ -Me] 349.1646, found 349.1638.

### 3. Cyclisation reactions

**General cyclisation procedure with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub>**: compound **1** (20.8 mmol) was added to dichloromethane (100 mL) and bismuth(III) triflate (Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub>) (0.208 mmol) was then added and the mixture stirred at room temperature. The reaction was followed by GC using 1,4-dichlorobenzene as the internal standard. After complete consumption of the starting material, the reaction was quenched with neutral activated aluminum oxide (42.4 mg, 416 mmol). The solid was then filtered off and the solvent removed under reduced pressure. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel with cyclohexane as the eluent (unless stated) or by distillation.

**Dimethyl 3-methoxy-4-(prop-1-en-2-yl)cyclopentane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 2a**: acetal **1a** (6 g, 20.81 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (137 mg, 0.208 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 10 minutes. After work-up, **2a** was obtained as a colorless oil with a GC ratio of 11/89. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (3.2 g, 12.49 mmol, 60%). *Trans* Isomer: **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 4.91 – 4.70 (m, 2H), 3.75 – 3.68 (m, 7H), 3.33 – 3.21 (m, 3H), 2.68 – 2.58 (m, 2H), 2.28 – 2.21 (m, 1H), 1.98 – 1.88 (m, 1H), 1.82 – 1.73 (m, 3H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 172.52, 172.15, 144.61, 111.23, 83.64, 57.11, 57.08, 52.77, 52.75, 51.83, 38.57, 36.47, 20.54. Isomer *cis*: 173.34, 172.27, 143.20, 111.43, 82.27, 58.04, 56.25, 52.81, 52.69, 50.99, 38.14, 35.29, 22.44. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 3083, 2827, 1735, 1649, 1257, 1103, 1086, 692 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>20</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 256.1311, found 256.1281.

**Dimethyl 4-methoxy-3-(prop-1-en-2-yl)cyclohexane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 2b**: acetal **1b** (3 g, 9.92 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (65 mg, 0.099 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 40 minutes. After work-up, **2b** was obtained as a colorless oil with a GC ratio of 70/30. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (1.6 g, 5.9 mmol, 60%). **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 4.94 – 4.65 (m, 2H), 3.83 – 3.64 (m, 6H), 3.57 – 3.47 (m, 1H), 3.35 – 3.23 (m, 3H), 2.53 – 1.88 (m, 5H), 1.83 – 1.70 (m, 3H), 1.70 – 1.10 (m, 2H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ Isomer *cis*: 173.06, 172.22, 146.75, 111.29, 75.96, 57.08, 55.53, 53.14, 53.01, 44.66, 29.86, 25.60, 25.18, 22.54. Isomer *trans*: 172.82, 171.48, 146.75, 112.48, 80.28, 56.77, 55.37, 53.27, 53.11, 48.43, 36.68, 30.34, 27.58, 20.15. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 3086, 2826, 1734, 1648, 1252, 1103, 1066, 692 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>22</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 270.1467, found 270.1445.

**Dimethyl 4-methoxy-4-methyl-3-(prop-1-en-2-yl)cyclohexane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 2c**: acetal **1c** (3 g, 9.48 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (62.2 mg, 0.95 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 24 hours. After work-up, **2c** was obtained as a colorless oil with a GC ratio of 70/30. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (2.18 g, 7.67 mmol, 81%). *Cis* isomer: **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 4.87 – 4.67 (m, 2H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 3.71 (s, 3H), 3.12 (s, 3H), 2.41 – 2.28 (m, 1H), 2.18 – 2.10 (m, 1H), 2.10 – 1.85 (m, 4H), 1.75 (s, 3H), 1.20 (ddd, *J* = 15.5, 14.1, 3.8 Hz, 1H), 1.06 (s, 3H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 172.65, 171.91, 146.25, 113.65, 73.49, 55.05, 52.63, 52.48, 51.74, 48.28, 31.39, 30.36, 26.36, 22.44, 21.50. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 3072, 2828, 1734, 1641, 1250, 1075, 696 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 284.1624, found 284.1621. The cyclisation to **2c** was run at a 300 g-scale with a yield of 69% after hexane crystallisation.

**Dimethyl 5-methoxy-3-methylcyclohex-3-ene-1,1-dicarboxylate, 2d**: acetal **1d** (2 g, 7.29 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (48 mg, 0.073 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 10 minutes. After work-up, the oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 90/10). Colorless oil (1.32 g, 5.45 mmol, 75%). The NMR ratio of isomers

for the olefin position was of 80/20. **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 5.59 - 5.42 (m, 1H), 3.82 - 3.73 (m, 1H), 3.73 - 3.63 (m, 6H), 3.39 - 3.24 (m, 3H), 2.63 - 2.51 (m, 1H), 2.36 - 2.18 (m, 3H), 1.73 (s, 3H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ Major isomer: 171.70, 171.35, 135.67, 120.81, 72.83, 55.89, 52.69, 52.47, 52.29, 35.22, 31.60, 23.21. Minor isomer: 171.65, 171.08, 136.39, 117.86, 73.52, 56.12, 52.81, 52.76, 52.29, 35.96, 32.70, 23.71. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 2822, 1738, 1683, 1259, 1083 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>18</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 242.1154, found 242.1150.

**Diisopropyl 3-methoxy-4-(prop-1-en-2-yl)cyclopentane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 2e:** acetal **1e** (2.5 g, 7.26 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (48 mg, 0.073 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 10 minutes. After work-up, **2e** was obtained as a colorless oil with a GC ratio of 10/90. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 95/5) (1.58 g, 5.06 mmol, 70%). **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 5.11 - 4.96 (m, 2H), 4.91 - 4.74 (m, 2H), 3.86 - 3.64 (m, 1H), 3.31 (s, 3H), 2.68 - 2.50 (m, 3H), 2.24 - 2.09 (m, 1H), 1.95 - 1.80 (m, 1H), 1.80 - 1.72 (m, 3H), 1.25 - 1.20 (m, 12H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ *Trans* isomer: 171.68, 171.19, 144.72, 111.21, 83.53, 68.91, 68.78, 57.21, 56.98, 51.85, 38.27, 36.13, 21.48, 21.46, 20.42. *Cis* isomer: 172.46, 171.28, 143.43, 111.33, 82.31, 68.86, 68.63, 58.18, 56.21, 50.93, 37.73, 35.07, 22.47, 21.48 (2C), 21.46 (2C). **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 3085, 2825, 1728, 1651, 1264, 1103, 887 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>28</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 312.1937, found 312.1962.

**Dimethyl 3-methoxy-4-(methoxy(phenyl)methyl)cyclopentane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 3f:** acetal **1f** (3 g, 8.92 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (59 mg, 0.089 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 20 minutes. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a GC ratio of isomers is of 59/26/11/4. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 98/2), (2.55 g, 7.6 mmol, 85%). For the major isomer: **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.45 - 7.10 (m, 5H), 4.29 - 4.08 (m, 1H), 3.81 - 3.59 (m, 7H), 3.40 - 3.07 (m, 6H), 2.59 - 2.40 (m, 2H), 2.40 - 2.22 (m, 2H), 2.21 - 2.05 (m, 1H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 172.60, 172.12, 140.64, 128.34 (2C), 127.55, 126.78 (2C), 83.55, 82.83, 58.01, 57.08, 56.68, 52.78, 52.69, 52.17, 38.71, 33.01. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 3029, 2826, 1735, 1682, 1266, 1093, 765, 705 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>6</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>] 336.1573, found 336.1574.

**Dimethyl 4-methoxy-3-(methoxy(phenyl)methyl)cyclohexane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 3g:** acetal **1g** (3 g, 8.56 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (56 mg, 0.086 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 20 minutes. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a GC ratio of isomers was of 47/30/18/5. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 90/10), (2.72 g, 7.76 mmol, 91%). For the major isomer: **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.40 - 7.23 (m, 5H), 4.83 - 4.62 (m, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 3.68 (s, 3H), 3.32 (s, 3H), 3.29 (s, 3H), 2.65 (dt, *J* = 13.7, 3.3 Hz, 1H), 2.57 (dd, *J* = 10.6, 4.3 Hz, 1H), 2.34 (dq, *J* = 13.3, 3.3 Hz, 1H), 2.27 - 2.05 (m, 2H), 1.50 - 1.17 (m, 3H). **<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 172.48, 171.16, 138.34, 127.90 (2C), 127.80 (2C), 127.30, 81.45, 77.99, 56.85, 54.90, 54.45, 52.64, 52.56, 43.84, 29.25, 29.08, 26.48. **FT-IR** λ max (NaCl): 3063, 3031, 2825, 1735, 1258, 1100, 769, 711 cm<sup>-1</sup>. **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>23</sub>O<sub>6</sub><sup>+</sup> [M<sup>+</sup>-Me] 335.1489, found 335.1486.

**Dimethyl 4-methoxy-3-(methoxy(phenyl)methyl)-4-methylcyclohexane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 3h:** acetal **1h** (2.5 g, 6.86 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (45 mg, 0.069 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 20 minutes. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a GC ratio of isomers was of 25/10/5/60. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 90/10), (2 g, 5.49 mmol, 80%). For the major isomer: **<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.47 - 7.13 (m, 5H), 4.41 (d, *J* = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 3.70 (s, 3H), 3.56 (s, 3H), 3.22 (s, 3H), 3.19 (s, 3H),



2.45 – 2.32 (m, 1H), 2.19 – 2.02 (m, 2H), 1.99 – 1.86 (m, 2H), 1.78 – 1.68 (m, 1H), 1.19 (ddd,  $J = 15.8$ , 14.5, 4.0 Hz, 1H), 1.01 (s, 3H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  172.68, 171.72, 143.10, 128.11 (2C), 127.04 (3C), 82.12, 73.56, 56.99, 54.98, 52.48, 52.13, 50.68, 48.69, 31.07, 26.86, 26.23, 23.71. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 3086, 3063, 3029, 2826, 1734, 1253, 1079, 765, 705  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{28}\text{O}_6$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 364.1886, found 364.1881.

**Dimethyl 5-methoxy-3-methylcyclohept-3-ene-1,1-dicarboxylate, 2i:** acetal **1i** (3 g, 10.4 mmol) in nitromethane with  $\text{Bi}(\text{OTf})_3$  (68 mg, 0.104 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 23 hours. After work-up, the oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 90/10) and **2i** was obtained as a colorless oil (500 mg, 1.95 mmol, 19%). The GC ratio of isomers for the olefin position was of 56/44.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  5.64 – 4.81 (m, 2H), 3.84 – 3.24 (m, 10H), 2.91 – 2.70 (m, 1H), 2.70 – 2.53 (m, 1H), 2.50 – 1.68 (m, 6H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  Major isomer: 172.29, 172.17, 140.72, 117.15, 79.21, 57.26, 56.06, 52.53 (2C), 42.69, 39.90, 28.19, 27.73. Minor isomer:  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz, Chloroform-*d*)  $\delta$  172.43, 171.26, 134.23, 130.67, 78.91, 56.18, 55.29, 52.27 (2C), 37.25, 31.85, 28.05, 26.62. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): Major isomer: 3077, 2825, 1735, 1647, (1282, 1246, 1197, 1164), 1097, 911  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . Minor isomer: 2822, 1734, 1073, (1241, 1205, 1175), 1090  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{17}\text{O}_5^+$  [ $\text{M}^+\text{-Me}$ ] 241.1071, found 241.1094.

**Methyl 4-methoxy-6-methyl-8-oxo-7-oxabicyclo[4.2.1]nonane-1-carboxylate, 5i:** acetal **1i** (3 g, 10.4 mmol) in nitromethane with  $\text{Bi}(\text{OTf})_3$  (68 mg, 0.104 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 23 hours. After work-up, the oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (ethyl acetate, 100%) and **5i** was obtained as a colorless oil (1.24 g, 5.12 mmol, 49%) with a GC isomer ratio of 60/40.  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (300 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  3.76 (s, 3H), 3.50 – 3.36 (m, 1H), 3.29 (s, 3H), 2.64 (d,  $J = 13.1$  Hz, 1H), 2.46 – 2.33 (m, 1H), 2.28 (d,  $J = 13.1$  Hz, 1H), 2.12 – 1.87 (m, 4H), 1.80 – 1.62 (m, 1H), 1.53 (s, 3H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  174.13, 170.60, 83.72, 77.87, 56.40, 56.19, 53.07, 44.24, 42.07, 30.35, 29.51, 28.26. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2827, 1771, 1742, 1247, 1093  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{18}\text{O}_5$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 242.1154, found 242.1162.

**General cyclisation procedure with  $\text{Fe}(\text{OTf})_3$ :** compound **1** (10.4 mmol) and methanol (20.8 mmol) were added to nitromethane (104 mL). Iron(III) triflate ( $\text{Fe}(\text{OTf})_3$ ) (0.104 mmol) was then added and the mixture stirred at room temperature. The reaction was followed by GC using 1,4-dichlorobenzene as the internal standard. After complete consumption of the starting material, the reaction was quenched with neutral activated aluminum oxide (21.2 mg, 0.208 mmol). The solid was then filtered off and the solvent removed under reduced pressure. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel or by distillation.

**Dimethyl 3-methoxy-4-(2-methoxypropan-2-yl)cyclopentane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 3a:** acetal **1a** (3 g, 10.4 mmol) and methanol (667 mg, 20.81 mmol) in nitromethane with  $\text{Fe}(\text{OTf})_3$  (52 mg, 0.104 mmol) were stirred at room temperature for 10 minutes. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a GC ratio of isomers was of 60/40. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane, 100%), colorless oil (2.35 g, 8.15 mmol, 78%).  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (500 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  3.78 – 3.70 (m, 7H), 3.24 – 3.16 (m, 6H), 2.72 (d,  $J = 14.6$  Hz, 1H), 2.48 – 2.39 (m, 1H), 2.33 – 2.25 (m, 1H), 2.15 – 2.06 (m, 2H), 1.24 – 1.11 (m, 6H).  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (126 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  *Cis* isomer: 173.44, 172.45, 82.40, 75.55, 57.88, 55.65, 52.74, 52.62, 52.56, 48.76, 38.03, 33.29, 23.70, 23.33. *Trans* isomer: 172.24, 172.04, 82.48, 74.69, 58.93, 56.27, 54.83, 52.58, 52.51, 49.15, 38.88, 33.97, 22.89, 22.74. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 2829, 1736, 1244, 1093  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{21}\text{O}_6^+$  [ $\text{M}^+\text{-Me}$ ] 273.1333, found 273.1335.

**Dimethyl 4-methoxy-3-(2-methoxypropan-2-yl)cyclohexane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 3b:** acetal **1b** (3 g, 9.92 mmol) and methanol (636 mg, 19.84 mmol) in nitromethane with Fe(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (50 mg, 0.099 mmol) were stirred at room temperature for 1 hour. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a GC ratio of isomers was of 83/17. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 90/10), colorless oil (1.52 g, 5 mmol, 51%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ *Cis* isomer: 3.74 (s, 3H), 3.71 (s, 3H), 3.52 (s, 1H), 3.26 (s, 3H), 3.19 (s, 3H), 2.26 – 2.18 (m, 1H), 2.16 – 1.90 (m, 4H), 1.71 – 1.66 (m, 1H), 1.39 – 1.30 (m, 1H), 1.18 (s, 6H). *Trans* isomer: 3.75 (s, 3H), 3.70 (s, 3H), 3.29 (s, 3H), 3.22 (s, 3H), 3.05 (td, *J* = 10.1, 4.2 Hz, 1H), 2.52 (dt, *J* = 14.0, 3.1 Hz, 1H), 2.39 (dq, *J* = 13.7, 3.6 Hz, 1H), 2.14 (dq, *J* = 13.3, 4.0 Hz, 1H), 1.92 – 1.81 (m, 1H), 1.75 (td, *J* = 13.7, 3.8 Hz, 1H), 1.49 – 1.37 (m, 1H), 1.33 (s, 3H), 1.23 – 1.19 (m, 1H), 1.12 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) *Cis* isomer: δ 173.43, 172.58, 77.21, 74.94, 56.48, 55.99, 53.34, 53.14, 49.43, 45.09, 27.49, 25.98, 25.65, 24.70, 23.37. *Trans* isomer: 172.70, 171.43, 80.04, 76.08, 55.58, 54.86, 52.72, 52.46, 48.63, 45.00, 30.87, 29.39, 27.40, 26.14, 23.04. FT-IR λ max (NaCl): 2828, 1734, 1248, 1084 cm<sup>-1</sup>. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>23</sub>O<sub>5</sub><sup>+</sup> [M<sup>+</sup>-OMe] 271.1540, found 271.1583.

**Diisopropyl 3-methoxy-4-(2-methoxypropan-2-yl)cyclopentane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 3e:** acetal **1e** (3 g, 8.71 mmol) and methanol (558 mg, 17.42 mmol) in nitromethane with Fe(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (43.8 mg, 0.087 mmol) were stirred at room temperature for 10 minutes. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a GC ratio of isomers was of 65/35. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 90/10), colorless oil (2.15 g, 6.24 mmol, 72%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 5.12 – 4.94 (m, 2H), 3.77 – 3.68 (m, 1H), 3.26 – 3.14 (m, 6H), 2.71 – 2.02 (m, 4H), 1.87 – 1.70 (m, 1H), 1.27 – 1.11 (m, 18H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ *Cis* isomer: 171.39, 171.05, 82.58, 74.77, 68.70, 68.40, 59.02, 56.44, 54.61, 49.12, 38.50, 33.68, 23.02, 22.78, 21.52 (2C), 21.48 (2C). *Trans* isomer: 172.55, 171.44, 82.47, 75.63, 68.76, 68.50, 58.07, 55.66, 52.17, 48.78, 37.70, 33.07, 23.90, 23.39, 21.57 (2C), 21.52 (2C). FT-IR λ max (NaCl): 2827, 1729, 1261, 1105 cm<sup>-1</sup>. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>29</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [M<sup>+</sup>-OMe] 313.2010, found 313.1972.

**Dimethyl 3,5-dimethoxy-3-methylcycloheptane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 3i:** acetal **1i** (3 g, 10.4 mmol) in nitromethane with Fe(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (52 mg, 0.104 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 23 hours. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a GC ratio of isomers was of 84/16. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 90/10). Colorless oil (1.93 g, 6.69 mmol, 64%). Major isomer: <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 3.70 (s, 6H), 3.29 (s, 4H), 3.13 (s, 3H), 2.62 (ddd, *J* = 15.0, 7.4, 4.9 Hz, 1H), 2.54 (d, *J* = 15.3 Hz, 1H), 2.04 (d, *J* = 15.3 Hz, 1H), 2.01 – 1.89 (m, 3H), 1.86 – 1.68 (m, 2H), 1.19 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 173.21, 172.27, 77.75, 74.36, 56.01, 54.82, 52.73, 52.28, 48.83, 42.57, 41.23, 28.57, 28.54, 26.35. FT-IR λ max (NaCl): 2829, 1733, 1277, 1091 cm<sup>-1</sup>. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>21</sub>O<sub>6</sub><sup>+</sup> [M<sup>+</sup>-Me] 273.1333, found 273.1335.

#### Cyclisation of ketone 6 for comparison:

**Dimethyl 4-hydroxy-4-methyl-3-(prop-1-en-2-yl)cyclohexane-1,1-dicarboxylate, 7:** ketone **6** (3 g, 11.1 mmol) in dichloromethane with Bi(OTf)<sub>3</sub> (73 mg, 0.111 mmol) was stirred at room temperature for 48 hours. After work-up, a colorless oil gave a NMR ratio of isomers was of 85/15. The oily residue was purified by flash-chromatography through silica-gel (cyclohexane/ethyl acetate, 80/20), colorless oil (700 mg, 2.59 mmol, 23%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 5.08 – 4.78 (m, 2H), 3.83 – 3.70 (m, 6H), 2.21 – 2.03 (m, 5H), 1.84 (s, 3H), 1.72 (dt, *J* = 14.4, 3.5 Hz, 1H), 1.58 – 1.46 (m, 2H), 1.15 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 172.50, 171.68, 146.85, 112.70, 69.20, 55.09, 52.69, 52.51, 48.89, 36.49, 32.05,

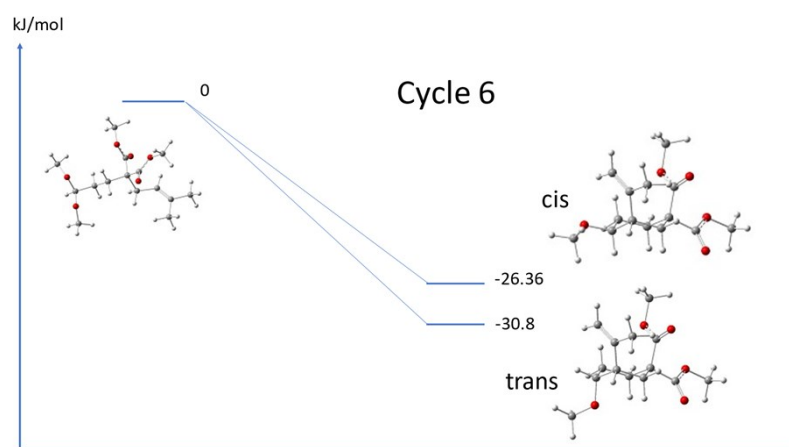
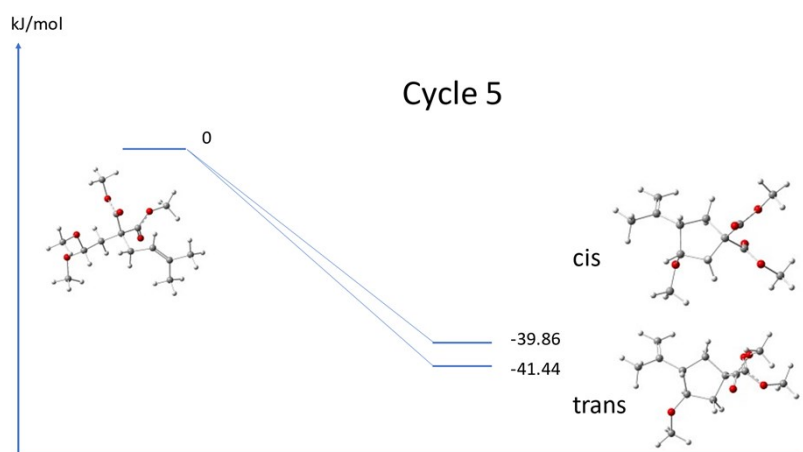
29.47, 26.41, 25.11. **FT-IR**  $\lambda$  max (NaCl): 3535, 3075, 2856, 1732, 1642, 1255, 1040, 900  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . **HRMS** (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{22}\text{O}_5$  [ $\text{M}^+$ ] 270.1467, found 270.1467.

#### 4. Theoretical calculations and kinetic data

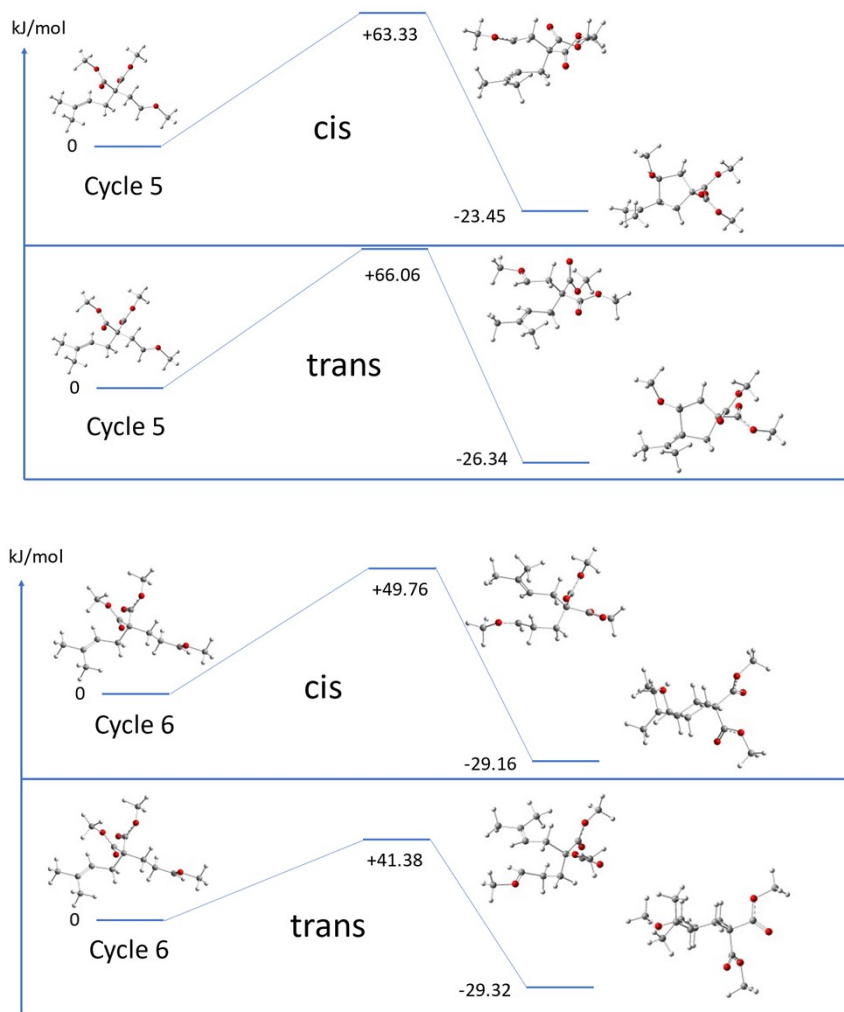
DFT calculation were carried out at ICN, University Côte d'Azur.

For the energies of **1a**, and **2a** in 5- and 6-membered rings:

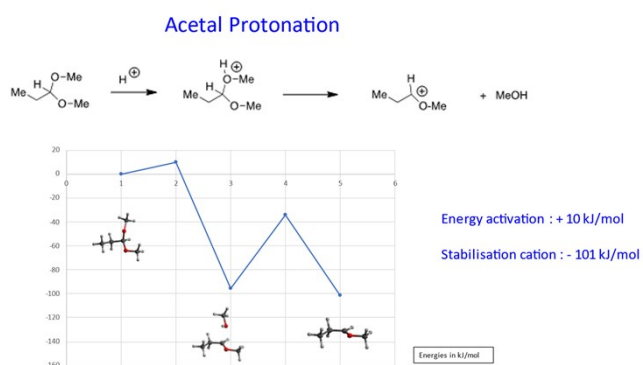
Method Gaussian 16, B3LYP/6-31+\*\*, solvent PCM dichloromethane.



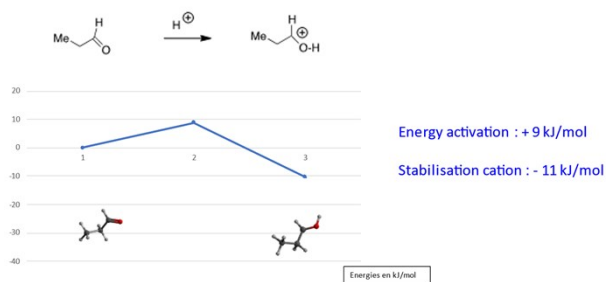
For the energies of the carbocation issued from **1a** and its cyclisation to 5- and 6-membered rings:



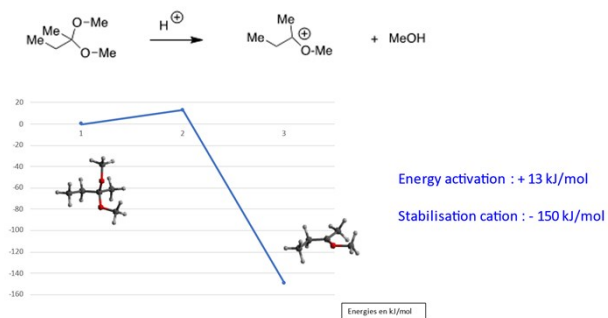
For the protonation of acetals and carbonyl groups, with GAUSSIAN 16. B3LYP 6-31+g(d,p), solvent PCM, nitromethane:



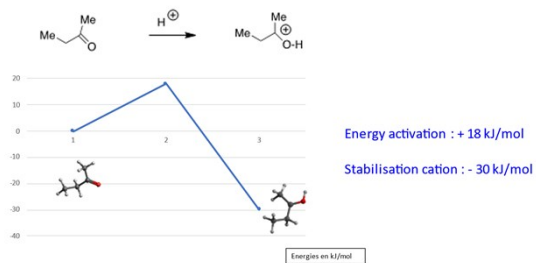
## Aldehyde Protonation



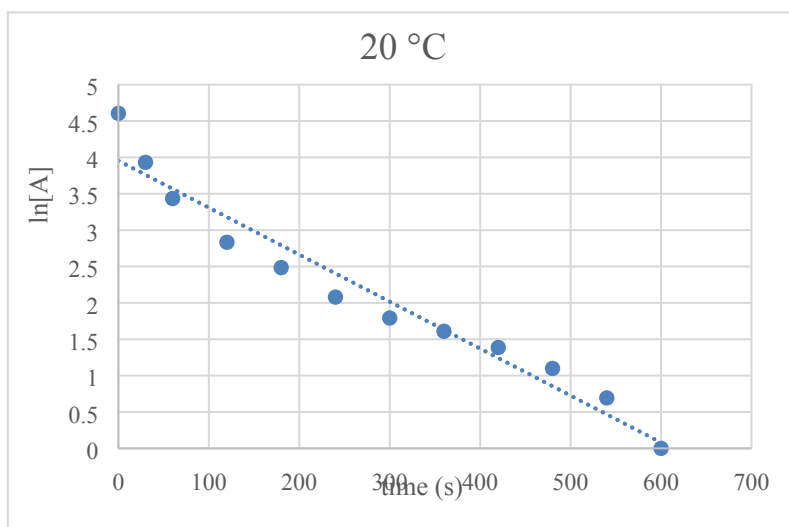
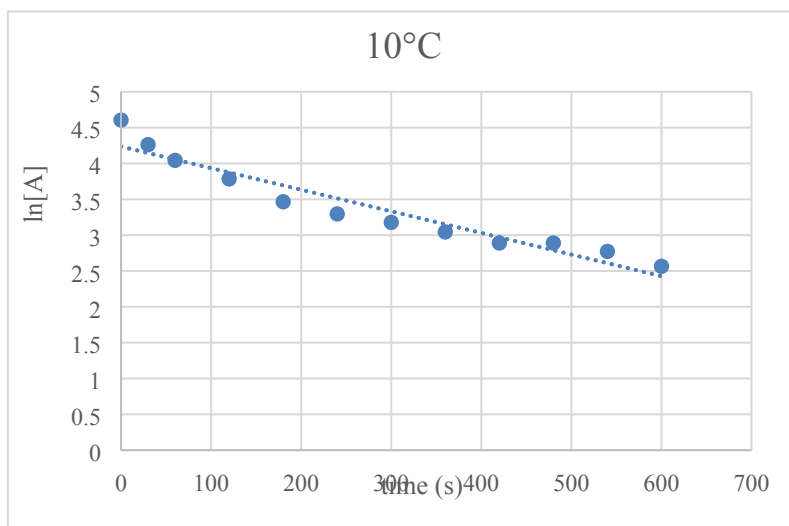
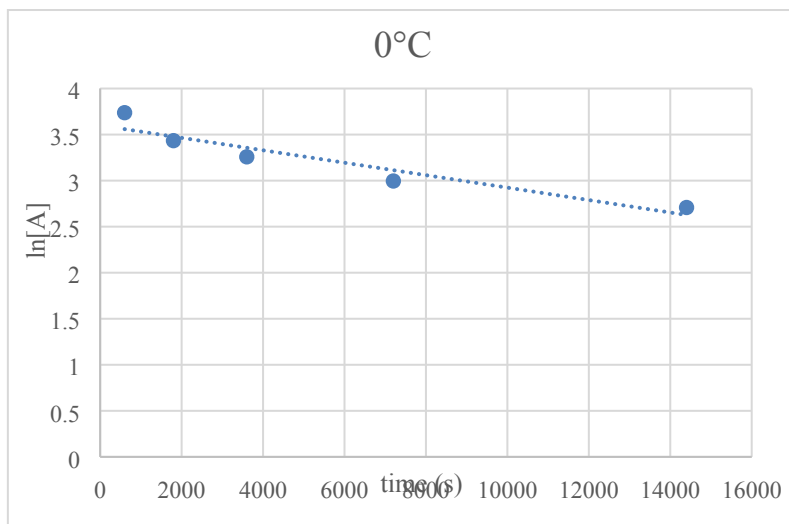
## Ketal Protonation

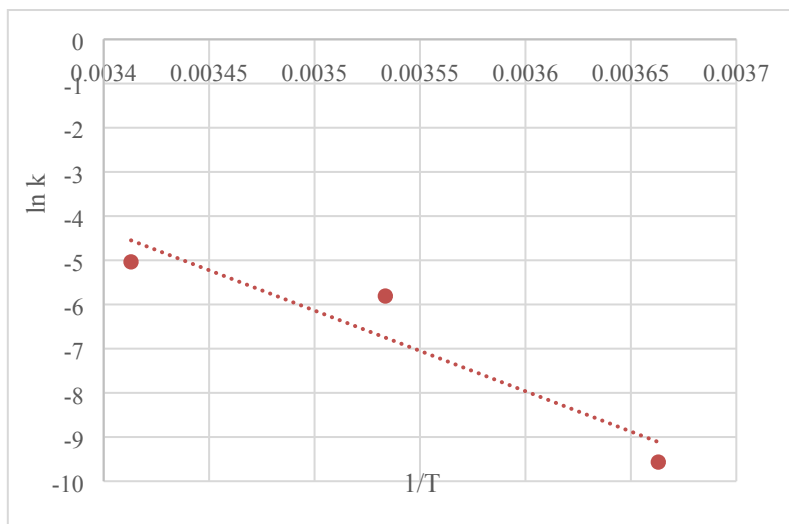


## Ketone Protonation



Kinetic data for the cyclisation of **1a**, at 0 °C, 10 °C and 20 °C, followed by the graph of  $\ln k$  versus  $1/T$ .







## 5. X-Ray analysis

Compound **2c** was crystallized in hexane and an X-Ray analysis was carried out at Spectropôle University Aix-Marseille.

