Mn(I) complexes with chiral pincer ligands in the asymmetric hydrogenation of ketones

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In 2017, two Mn(I) complexes with chiral pincer ligands were reported as catalysts in the asymmetric hydrogenation of ketones, which is an appealing reaction for industrial application due to the low-toxicity, earth-abundance, and low cost of manganese. Complex $\bf 1$ is active in ATH and complex $\bf 2$ in AH [1,2].

We have prepared novel Mn(I) complexes with chiral PNP ($\mathbf{3,4}$) and PNN pincer ligands ($\mathbf{5}$) based on stereogenic phosphorus. We are testing these complexes as catalysts in the AH and ATH of ketones. The hydrogenation of acetophenone with complex $\mathbf{4}$ as catalyst (1 mol% catalyst, 50 bar H₂, toluene, 100 °C) gives 99% of yield and 48% of ee after 16 h. With the aim of enhancing the enantioselectivity, a more rigid linker will be introduced between the N and P atoms.

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