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Enantio reversal in the Sharpless Asymmetric Epoxidation Reaction Controlled by the Molecular Weight of a Covalently Appended Achiral Polymer
J. Org. Chem. **2005**, *70*, 1728-1731.

Molecular Weight Induced Enantio reversal in Sharpless Asymmetric Epoxidation

Significance: The molecular weight of the poly(ethylene glycol) monomethyl ether (MPEG) can reverse the enantioselectivity for Sharpless epoxidation. A relatively narrow molecular weight range of 800 is sufficient to provide the enantio reversal.

Comment: While the Sharpless asymmetric epoxidation is one of the most powerful synthetic tools, this finding stands to expand on this reaction. So far, various mechanistic investigations are reported for this important transformation. This paper provides completely new insights for the mechanism. The observed enantio reversal was proposed to occur as a result of 2:1 titanium–ligand complex, as opposed to the 2:2 titanium–ligand complex of normal Sharpless asymmetric epoxidation.

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Synfacts 2005, 0, 0044-0044

DOI: 10.1055/s-2005-869913; **Reg-No.:** H00505SF

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