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### THE METHYL ESTER OF 3-AZIDOTETRAFLUOROPROPIONIC ACID - A NOVEL REAGENT FOR THE OXIDATIVE FLUORINATION OF GROUP 15 AND 16 ELEMENTS

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# THE METHYL ESTER OF 3-AZIDOTETRAFLUOROPROPIONIC ACID – A NOVEL REAGENT FOR THE OXIDATIVE FLUORINATION OF GROUP 15 AND 16 ELEMENTS

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The methyl ester of 3-azidotetrafluoropropionic acid,  $N_3-CF_2CF_2COOMe$  oxidatively fluorinates P(III), Sb(III) and Te(II) compounds to form the corresponding difluorides in good yield.

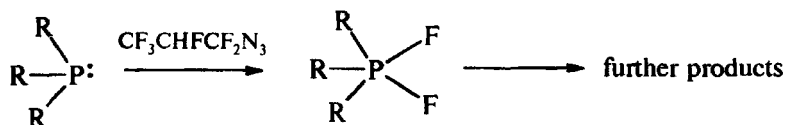
**Keywords:** Methyl 3-azidotetrafluoropropionate; oxidative fluorination; organophosphorus fluorides; organoantimony fluorides; organotellurium fluorides

Fluorinated compounds are of considerable interest in inorganic, organic, polymer, industrial and medicinal chemistry<sup>[1-5]</sup>. Particularly valuable are mild and selective fluorinating agents and methods for the facile fluorination of organic and organoelement compounds<sup>[4-6]</sup>. The great majority of fluorinating agents are of nucleophilic character. The reagents which are capable of electrophilic fluorination include  $F_2$  itself<sup>[7]</sup>,  $XeF_2$ <sup>[8]</sup>,  $PhIF_2$ <sup>[9]</sup>, acetyl hypofluorite,  $MeCOOF$ <sup>[10]</sup>, and N-fluoroamines and amides<sup>[11]</sup>. Unfortunately, these reagents have various drawbacks and limitations such as hazardous handling ( $F_2$ ,  $RCOOF$ ), high cost and lack of selectivity ( $XeF_2$ , N-F compounds) or weak fluorinating ability ( $PhIF_2$ ), and finally, they all are usually prepared *via*  $F_2$ . Therefore, new electrophilic fluorinat-

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ing agents that allow the facile introduction of fluorine under mild conditions into electron rich substrates are highly desirable and useful.

We have recently shown<sup>[12]</sup> that the stable 2-hydroperfluoropropyl azide,  $\text{CF}_3\text{CHFCF}_2\text{N}_3$ , readily fluorinates various organophosphorus(III) compounds, affording difluorophosphoranes in high yield and hence, serving as an oxidative fluorinating agent.



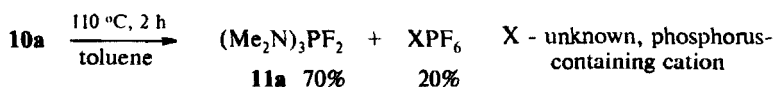
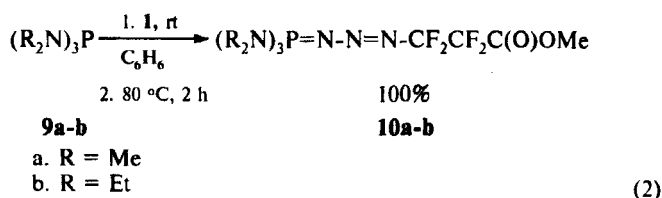
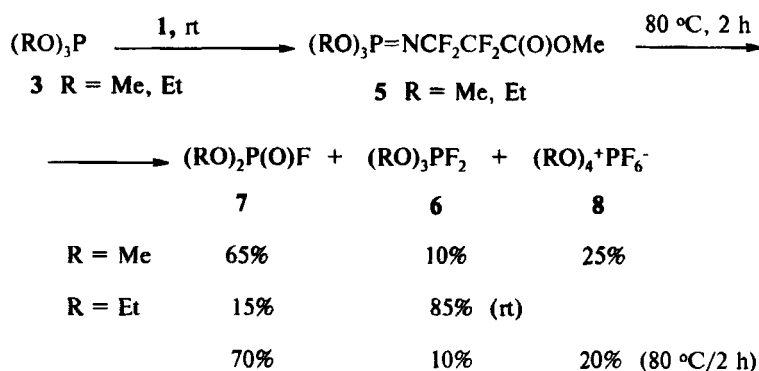
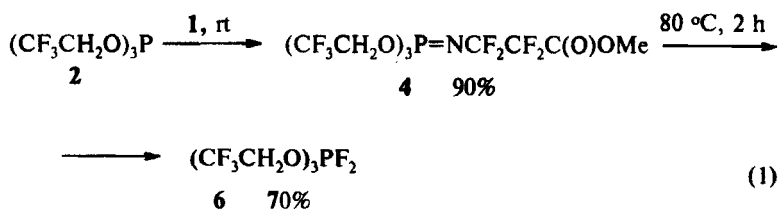
In this paper we describe the reactions of 3-azidotetrafluoropropionic acid methyl ester  $\text{MeOCO-CF}_2\text{CF}_2\text{-N}_3$ , **1**, with some P(III), Sb(III) and Te(II) compounds. This azide (first prepared by C. G. Krespan and his co-workers<sup>[13]</sup>) has the same  $\text{N}_3\text{-CF}_2\text{-}$  moiety as  $\text{CF}_3\text{CHFCF}_2\text{N}_3$  and we could expect that the fluorinating properties would be similar. Besides, the boiling point of **1** is significantly higher than that of  $\text{CF}_3\text{CHFCF}_2\text{N}_3$ . This can be convenient in synthetic applications.

## REACTIONS OF **1** WITH P(III) COMPOUNDS

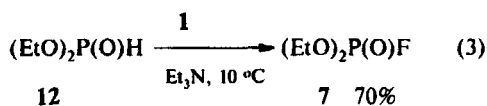
We have found that the azide **1** reacts smoothly with trivalent phosphorus compounds, affording the corresponding products of oxidative fluorination. Thus, the trialkyl phosphites **2** and **3** react with the azide **1** at ambient temperature to form the phosphazenes **4** and **5**. These phosphazenes are stable enough at room temperature but decompose readily upon heating in benzene producing the difluorophosphoranes **6** and further reaction products (Eq. 1).

Diethyl fluorophosphate **7** ( $\text{R} = \text{Et}$ ) can easily be isolated in a pure state by distillation in 54% yield.

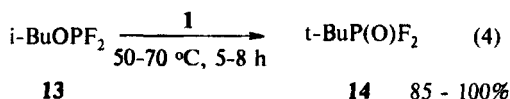
The hexaalkyltriaminophosphines, **9a-b**, also readily react with the azide **1** to form quantitatively stable phosphazides **10a-b** as primary products (no traces of the corresponding phosphazenes could be found in reaction mixtures). The phosphazide **10a** is a crystalline compound which can be isolated in a pure state and analyzed. Its thermal decomposition gives the difluorophosphorane **11a** in a good yield (Eq. 2)



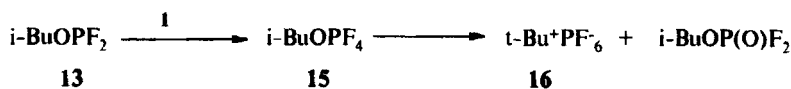
Diethyl phosphite, **12**, reacts with the azide **1** vigorously in a triethylamine solution to form diethyl fluorophosphate, **7**, in 70% isolated yield (Eq. 3).



An interesting Arbuzov-like rearrangement takes place during the reaction of the azide **1** with *iso*-butyl difluorophosphite, **13**. *tert*-Butylphosphonic difluoride, **14**, is formed as the main product (Eq. 4).

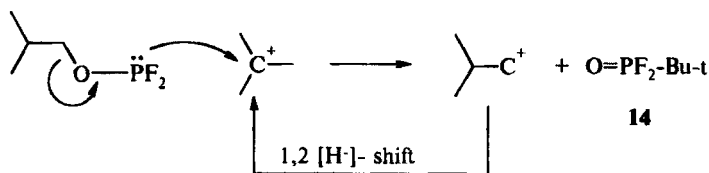


The reaction proceeds with catalytic amounts of the azide **1** (20% mol.) and is followed by the isomerization of an initial *i*-Bu substituent into a tertiary one. The mechanism of this transformation is undoubtedly analogous to that described for  $\text{CF}_3\text{CHF}(\text{CF}_2\text{N}_3)$  [12] and includes primary oxidative fluorination of **13** to the unstable tetrafluorophosphorane **15** followed by its disproportionation into the alkylphosphonium salt **16** which is indeed the true catalyst of the rearrangement process (Scheme 1).



SCHEME 1

The disproportionation  $\textbf{15} \rightarrow \textbf{16} + \text{ROP(O)F}_2$  (for R = Me) is described in the literature [14]. The next step is a classical Arbuzov rearrangement accompanied by a catalyst recovery (Scheme 2).

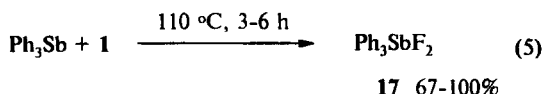


SCHEME 2

On the whole the fluorinating properties of the azide **1** towards P(III) compounds are similar to those described for  $\text{CF}_3\text{CHF}(\text{CF}_2\text{N}_3)$  [12] but display at least one peculiarity - the intermediate compounds **4**, **5** and **10** are much more stable than in the case of  $\text{CF}_3\text{CHF}(\text{CF}_2\text{N}_3)$  and in some cases can even be isolated and analyzed.

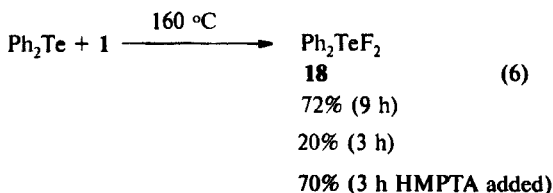
## FLUORINATION OF Sb(III) AND Te(II) COMPOUNDS

We have found, that the reaction of the azide **1** with  $\text{Ph}_3\text{Sb}$  in toluene leads to a high yield of  $\text{Ph}_3\text{SbF}_2$ , **17** (Eq. 5).

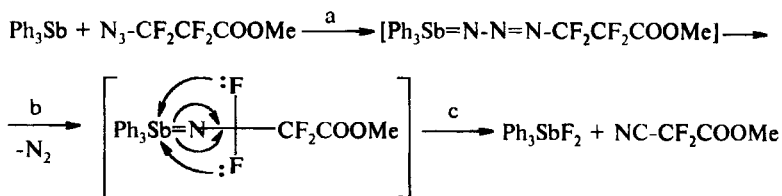


This reaction requires higher temperatures than the analogous reactions with organophosphorus compounds. The difluoride **17** can be isolated in a pure crystalline form.

The reaction of  $\text{Ph}_2\text{Te}$  with the azide **1** proceeds at higher temperatures and also gives the desired product of oxidative fluorination – difluoride  $\text{Ph}_2\text{TeF}_2$ , **18**, in a good yield. In contrast to  $\text{Ph}_3\text{Sb}$ , the reaction appeared to be sensitive to the presence of a dipolar aprotic solvent, namely of hexamethylphosphorotriamide (HMPTA). The addition of small amounts of HMPTA to a reaction mixture increased the yield of **18** significantly (Eq. 6).



The mechanism of the fluorination reaction is undoubtedly similar to that described for  $\text{CF}_3\text{CHF}_2\text{CF}_2\text{N}_3$  [12] (Scheme 3), and includes a Staudinger-like reaction – steps (a) and (b), and sigmatropic fluorine transfer with the formation of a stable nitrile and strong element-F bonds (c).



SCHEME 3

Thus, azide **1** can be regarded, to some extent, as a synthon of the following mixture:  $\text{MeOCOCF}_2\text{CF}_2\text{N}_3 \Rightarrow [\text{F}_2] + \text{N}_2 + \text{MeOCOCF}_2\text{CN}$

## EXPERIMENTAL

$^{31}\text{P}$  and  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker CXP-200 spectrometer. Chemical shifts are reported in  $\delta$ -units downfield from external 85%  $\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4$  and  $\text{CF}_3\text{COOH}$ , respectively. Melting points are uncorrected. Azide **1** was synthesized according to a literature procedure [13].

### Fluorination of Trialkyl phosphites

A. Phosphite **2**. A solution of 0.42 g ( $2.09 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of the azide **1** in 2 mL of dry benzene was added dropwise to a stirred solution of 0.595 g ( $1.81 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **2** in 2 mL of dry benzene cooled by cold water, and the resulting mixture was kept for 20 min at rt. The  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectrum of the resulting mixture contained the signal of **4** ( $-6.38$ , tt,  $^3J(\text{P-F}) = 18$  Hz,  $^4J(\text{P-F}) = 4.3$  Hz; 90%) and 10% of some unidentified impurities. After heating in refluxing benzene during 2 h the  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR of the reaction mixture contained no signal of **4**, but 70% of the difluorophosphorane ( $\text{CF}_3\text{CH}_2\text{O}$ ) $_3\text{PF}_2$ , **6**, ( $-77.25$ , t,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 749$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[15]</sup>  $\delta\text{P}$   $-77.3$ , t,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 747$  Hz).

B. Phosphite **3** ( $\text{R} = \text{Me}$ ). The analogous reaction of 0.316 g ( $2.55 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **3** ( $\text{R} = \text{Me}$ ) with 0.56 g ( $2.79 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **1** in benzene gave the phosphazene **5** ( $\text{R} = \text{Me}$ ) ( $\delta\text{P}$   $4.1$  (tt,  $^3J(\text{P-F}) = 15.4$  Hz,  $^4J(\text{P-F}) = 5.3$  Hz) and the difluorophosphorane ( $\text{MeO}$ ) $_3\text{PF}_2$ , **6**, ( $\delta\text{P}$   $-70$ , t,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 722$  Hz) in 1: 1 ratio. Lit.<sup>[16]</sup> for **6** ( $\text{R} = \text{Me}$ ):  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 706$  Hz. After heating in refluxing benzene during 2 h the  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectrum of the reaction mixture contained the signal of ( $\text{MeO}$ ) $_2\text{P}(\text{O})\text{F}$ , **7** ( $\delta\text{P}$   $-6.2$ , d,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 974$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[17]</sup>  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 949$  Hz), **6**, and ( $\text{MeO}$ ) $_4\text{P}^+\text{PF}_6^-$  ( $\delta\text{P}$   $0$ , s,  $-143.3$ , heptet,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 708$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[18]</sup> ( $\delta\text{P}$   $0$ , s,  $-147$ , m,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 700$  Hz) in 65: 10: 25 ratio.

C. Phosphite **3** ( $\text{R} = \text{Et}$ ). In the analogous reaction of 1.94 g ( $1.17 \cdot 10^{-2}$  mol) of ( $\text{EtO}$ ) $_3\text{P}$  with 2.8 g ( $1.39 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **1** in benzene the reaction mixture consisted of 85% of the difluorophosphorane ( $\text{EtO}$ ) $_3\text{PF}_2$ , **6**, ( $\delta\text{P}$   $-74.1$ , t,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 725$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[19]</sup>  $\delta\text{P}$   $-74.78$ , t,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 722.7$  Hz) and

15% of **7** ( $R = \text{Et}$ ) ( $\delta\text{P} -8.2$ , d,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 972$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[17]</sup>  $\delta\text{P} -9.2$ , d,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 963$  Hz). The reaction mixture was refluxed during 2 h and distilled *in vacuo*. 0.98 g (54%) of  $(\text{EtO})_2\text{P}(\text{O})\text{F}$ , **7**, were obtained. Bp  $60 - 65^\circ\text{C}/15$  mm.; Lit.<sup>[20]</sup> Bp  $63^\circ\text{C}/12$  mm.

### Reaction of **1** with the triaminophosphines **9a** and **9b**

1.12 g ( $5.57 \cdot 10^{-2}$  mol) of **1** in 3 mL of dry benzene were added dropwise to a cold water cooled solution of 0.808 g ( $4.96 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **9a** in 4 mL of dry benzene. The mixture was stirred during 3 h and kept overnight. The  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectrum contained only one signal:  $\delta\text{P} 42.77$ , S. Heating of the reaction mixture during 2 h at reflux left this signal unchanged. The solvent was evaporated *in vacuo* and the residue was recrystallized from a 1: 3 benzene: heptane mixture. Pure **10a** was obtained as colourless crystals, mp  $94 - 95^\circ\text{C}$ .

$^{31}\text{P}$  NMR:  $\delta\text{P} 42.92$ , S.

$^{19}\text{F}$  NMR:  $\delta\text{F} -18.7$  (t),  $-42.0$  (t)  $^3J(\text{F-F}) = 6.7$  Hz.

$^1\text{H}$  NMR:  $\delta\text{H} 2.59$  (d,  $^3J(\text{H-P}) = 9.4$  Hz (18H);  $3.77$ , S (3H)).

Anal. Calc. for  $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{21}\text{N}_6\text{O}_2\text{PF}_4$ : C, 32.97, H, 5.81, N, 23.07, P 8.50. Found: C, 33.01, H, 5.71, N, 23.05, P, 8.52.

Heating of **10a** in dry toluene during 2 h at reflux afforded a mixture of 70% of **11a** ( $\delta\text{P} -63.9$ , t,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 700$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[21]</sup>  $\delta\text{P} 65.7$ , t,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 700$  Hz;  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 707$  Hz<sup>[16]</sup>), 20% of some  $\text{PF}_6^-$ -containing substance ( $\delta\text{P} 25.6$ , S;  $-143.5$ , heptet,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 710$  Hz) and 10% of several minor impurities.

The analogous reaction of 0.54 g ( $2.19 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **9b** and 0.56 g ( $2.79 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **1** in benzene afforded **10b** quantitatively ( $\delta\text{P} 42.78$ , s). The substance remained unchanged after 2 h heating in refluxing benzene but our attempts to distill it failed.

### Fluorination of diethyl phosphite, **12**

A solution of 0.84 g ( $4.18 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **1** in 2 mL of dry  $\text{Et}_3\text{N}$  was added dropwise to a water cooled solution of 0.43 g ( $3.1 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **12** in 2 mL of  $\text{Et}_3\text{N}$ . After the completion of an exothermic reaction the mixture was stirred during 3 h at rt. The  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectrum revealed the formation of 70% of  $(\text{EtO})_2\text{P}(\text{O})\text{F}$ , **7**, ( $\delta\text{P} -8.5$ , d,  $^1J(\text{P-F}) = 970$  Hz) and 30% of several minor compounds.



### The reaction of *iso*-butyl difluorophosphite, **13**, with **1**

0.5 g ( $3.52 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **13** and 0.14 g ( $7 \cdot 10^{-4}$  mol) of **1** were mixed in a steel bomb and heated at 50 °C during 5 h. The reaction mixture contained 85% of *t*-BuP(O)F<sub>2</sub>, **14**, ( $\delta_P$  32.1, *t* of decets,  $^1J(P-F) = 1173$  Hz;  $^3J_{P-H} = 19.7$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[22]</sup>  $\delta_P$  31.8, *t* of decets,  $^1J(P-F) = 1195$  Hz;  $^3J(P-H) = 18.8$  Hz), 15% of the starting **13** and traces of *i*-BuOP(O)F<sub>2</sub> ( $\delta_P$  -19.8, *tt*,  $^1J(P-F) = 1004$  Hz,  $^3J(P-H) = 8$  Hz). Heating of the reaction mixture at 70 °C during 8 h afforded practically pure **14**.

### Fluorination of Ph<sub>3</sub>Sb

A solution of 0.194 g ( $5.5 \cdot 10^{-4}$  mol) of Ph<sub>3</sub>Sb and 0.35 g ( $1.74 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of the azide **1** in 3.5 mL of dry toluene was heated at reflux during 6 h. A known quantity of *m*-fluorotoluene was added as internal signal for NMR integration. The <sup>19</sup>F NMR spectrum revealed the quantitative formation of the difluoride **17**. After removal of the solvent and recrystallization from *n*-heptane pure **17** was obtained. Mp 112–113 °C, <sup>19</sup>F NMR:  $\delta_F$  -75.1, *s*. Lit.<sup>[23]</sup>  $\delta_F$  -153.2 (CFCl<sub>3</sub>) (*s*). Mp 120 – 122 °C<sup>[24]</sup>. Heating of the reaction mixture during 3 h afforded **17** in 67% yield.

### Fluorination of Ph<sub>2</sub>Te

A. A solution of 0.153 g ( $5.43 \cdot 10^{-4}$  mol) of Ph<sub>2</sub>Te and 0.35 g ( $1.74 \cdot 10^{-4}$  mol) of **1** in 1.5 mL of dry CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> was heated in a steel bomb at 160 °C during 9 h. <sup>19</sup>F NMR revealed the formation of 72% of Ph<sub>2</sub>TeF<sub>2</sub>, **18** (NMR integration, using a known quantity of *m*-fluorotoluene as internal standard). After removal of the solvent and recrystallization from heptane the difluoride **18** was obtained in a pure state. Mp 146 – 148 °C, <sup>19</sup>F NMR: -50.4,  $^1J(Te-F) = 544$  Hz; Lit.<sup>[25]</sup> mp 152 °C.

B. Heating of the previous reaction mixture during 3 h afforded **18** in 20% yield. C.

A solution of 0.157 g ( $5.57 \cdot 10^{-4}$  mol) of Ph<sub>2</sub>Te, 0.35 g ( $1.74 \cdot 10^{-3}$  mol) of **1** and 0.2 mL of dry HMPTA in 1.5 mL of CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> was heated in a steel bomb at 160 °C during 3 h. The yield of **18** was 70% (NMR integration).

### Acknowledgements

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