



Novel symmetrical triads of triphenylene-calix[4]arene-triphenylene: synthesis and mesomorphism

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 13 November 2011

Revised 8 January 2012

Accepted 18 January 2012

Available online 28 January 2012

Keywords:

Triphenylene

Calix[4]arene

Mesomorphism

Synthesis

Triad

ABSTRACT

Two novel symmetrical triads of triphenylene-calix[4]arene-triphenylene bridged by aromatic amido or hydrazone spacers were synthesized with stepwise procedures in yields of 67% and 68%, respectively. They exhibited interesting mesomorphic behavior of triphenylene column with calix[4]arene units on ancillary lateral sides.

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Discotic and columnar liquid crystals have been extensively studied due to their various applications, such as organic light-emitting diodes, organic photovoltaic cells, organic field-effect transistors, gas sensors, photocopying machines.^{1–4} Triphenylenes are one of the most widely studied discotic liquid crystals.^{1–8} To improve their processability and functionality, twinned structures of triphenylene have received much attention recently.^{9–12} The studies indicated the mesomorphic properties and molecular stacking behaviors of twinned triphenylene derivatives were greatly influenced by the functional group, length, and flexibility of linking spacer.^{13,14} Recently, the macrocycle-linked triphenylene dimers attracted much attention. In 2010, Cammidge reported the triphenylene dimers are linked by shape-persistent conjugated macrocycle or crown ether macrocycle with interesting mesomorphic properties.^{15,16} Peng and Laschat, respectively, also described the syntheses and mesomorphic properties of similar macrocycle-linked triphenylene dimers.^{17,18} Lately, Wang synthesized triphenylene-fused porphyrins with interesting UV–vis absorptions.¹⁹ These researches suggested that macrocycle-linked triphenylene dimers showed interesting properties due to their unique structures and the mesomorphic properties were controlled by the complexation behaviors of macrocycle units in some cases.¹⁸ Obviously, the mesomorphic properties tuned by the complexation capabilities of macrocycle units exhibit application prospects on molecular switch of liquid crystal, which deserve to be studied extensively. However,

apart from these several examples, the macrocycle-linked triphenylene dimers were almost unknown until now.

Calixarenes are the third generation supramolecular platforms after crown ether and cyclodextrin.^{20,21} Many researches were focused on syntheses and complexation properties of various calixarene derivatives. Some of calixarene-based liquid crystals were also studied by introducing the long alkyl chain on the upper or lower rim of calixarene skeleton.^{22–27} Most recently, we reported the first example of calixarene-linked triphenylene dimers bridged by long alkyl chain.²⁸ It exhibited interesting mesomorphic stacking behavior of the calixarenes bowl-like column with two triphenylene units as ancillary lateral columns (as shown in Fig. 4(a)). Has there any other molecular stacking behavior for this kind of triads?

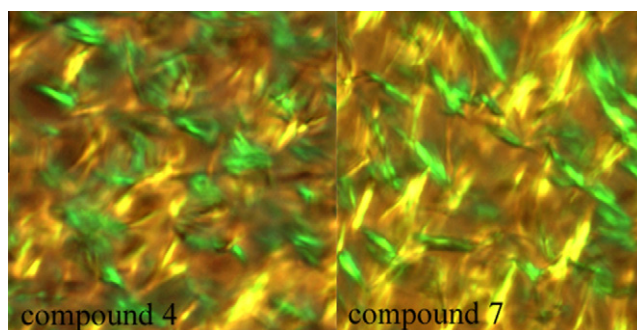


Figure 1. The textures of triads **4** and **7** under POM on cooling at 45 °C (×400).

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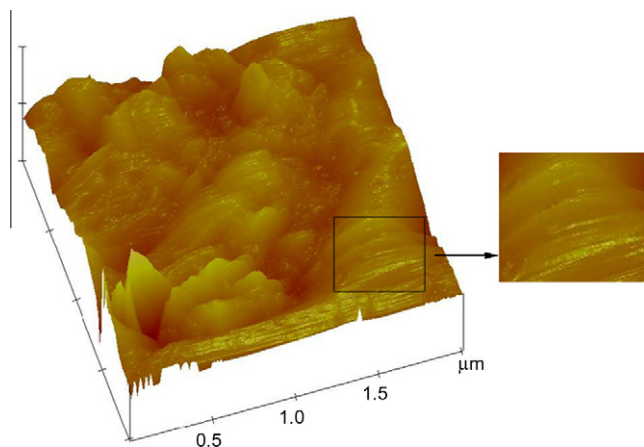


Figure 2. AFM image of triad **4** with columnar structure.

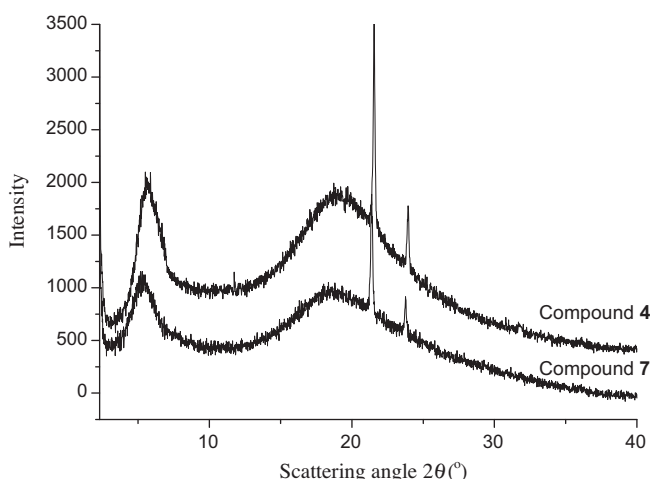


Figure 3. XRD traces of triads **4** and **7** at 45 °C.

Considering the fact that mesomorphic properties were greatly influenced by the structures of linking spacers, we are interested in studying the relationship between structures and mesomorphic stacking behaviors for this kind of triads. In this Letter, we wish to report the design and syntheses of novel symmetrical triads of triphenylene-calix[4]arene-triphenylene bridging by aromatic amido or hydrazone spacers, which were utterly different from alkyl

chains. Moreover, the mesomorphic experiments indicated that they possessed novel interesting mesomorphic properties of triphenylene column with calixarene units on ancillary lateral sides, which were observed for the first time.

The synthetic route of symmetrical triad of triphenylene-calix[4]arene-triphenylene bridged by aromatic amido spacers **4** was shown in Scheme 1. According to the literature methods,⁸ ω -bromo-substituted triphenylenes **1** was prepared by reacting monohydroxytriphenylene with excess 1, 6-dibromohexane under K_2CO_3 /MeCN system in a good yield. Subsequently, by reacting compound **1** with Boc-protected aminophenol and then deprotection by trifluoroacetic acid, compound **2** was obtained in a high yield. After the acylation of compound **2** with chloroacetyl chloride, triphenylene derivative **3** with terminal-chloromethyl group was prepared in a yield of 94%. Then refluxing compound **3** with *p*-*tert*-butyl calix[4]arene under K_2CO_3 /MeCN system for 48 h by using KI as the catalyst, target triad **4** was separated successfully after column chromatography in a yield of 67%.²⁹ No matter what the ratios of starting materials were, compound **4** was still the main product and no tetra-substituted calix[4]arene derivative was obtained due to the influence of steric hindrance.

Also, another similar triad of triphenylene-calix[4]arene-triphenylene bridged by hydrazone spacers **7** was designed and synthesized as shown in Scheme 2. By the etherization of compound **1** with methyl 6-bromohexanoate and then ammonolysis with hydrazine hydrate, compound **5** was obtained in an 82% yield. Then, compound **5** was treated with calix[4]arene di-benzaldehyde derivative **6**³⁰ to afford novel triad of triphenylene-calix[4]arene-triphenylene **7** in a 68% yield after column chromatography.³¹

New compounds were characterized by element analyses, UV, IR, ESI-MS, and NMR spectra. The ESI-MS spectra of them showed corresponding molecular ion peaks. All the protons were assigned well in their 1H NMR spectra. Especially, compounds **4** and **7** exhibited two singlets (1:1) for the *tert*-butyl groups and one pair of doublets (1:1) for the methylene bridges, which indicated that calix[4]arene unit adopts cone conformation.

The mesomorphic behaviors of compounds **4** and **7** were preliminarily studied by differential scanning calorimetry. The results were shown in Table 1. It can be seen that both compounds possessed multiple phase transitions upon heating and cooling. Compound **4** showed three phase transfer temperatures at 39.47 °C, 48.64 °C, and 72.96 °C upon second heating process and three reverse processes at 65.60 °C, 51.60 °C, and 37.26 °C upon cooling process. Similarly, compound **7** exhibited three phase transfer temperatures at 34.13 °C, 46.64 °C, and 66.80 °C upon second heating scan and three reverse processes 51.93 °C, 35.18 °C, and 30.0 °C upon cooling. Judging from these DSC data, it could be deduced

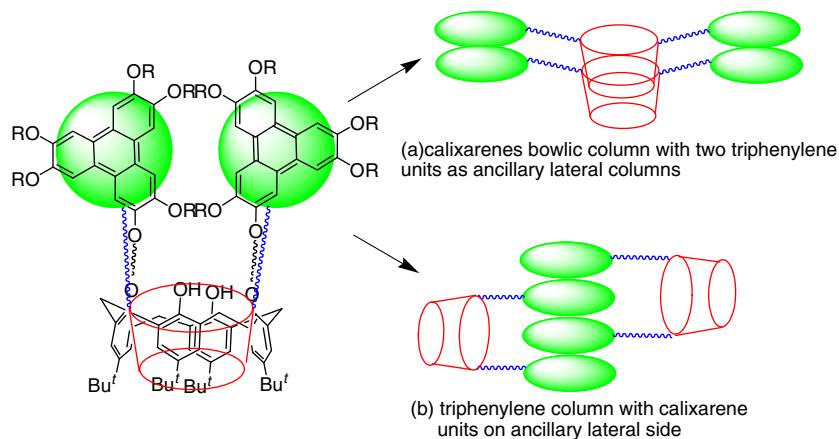


Figure 4. Two kinds of schematic representation of the columnar layered molecular arrangement for triads of triphenylene-calixarene-triphenylene.

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