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## Helicene-based chiroptical switches

### Commutateurs chiroptiques à base d'hélicènes

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**Abstract:** Helicenes are molecules with *ortho*-fused aromatic rings that adopt a inherently chiral helical shape. This helical topology combined with the extended  $\pi$ -conjugated system provides them with excellent chiroptical and photophysical properties. These properties and peculiarities make helicenes important candidates for the conception of new chiroptical switches. Several examples of light-, redox- and pH-triggered helicene-based switches have recently appeared in the literature including examples from our group. Some of them are multi-input and/or multi-output systems in which the changes can be triggered by different stimuli and/or read-out by different techniques, an attractive advantage for functional materials.

**Keywords:** chiroptical switches, helicenes, optical activity, circularly polarized light, circular dichroism, molecular materials.

**Mots clés:** Commutateurs chiroptiques, hélicènes, activité optique, lumière polarisée circulairement, dichroïsme circulaire, matériaux moléculaires.

## 1. Introduction

Helicenes are molecules with *ortho*-fused aromatic rings that adopt a helical shape as a consequence of the steric hindrance between the terminal rings [1]. The first hetero[5]helicenes were reported in 1903 by Meisenheimer and Witte, [2] and the first synthesis and resolution of carbo[6]helicene (hexahelicene) was performed by Newman in the 1950s [3a-c]. Since then, numerous methods have given access to a great variety of carbo-, hetero- and metallo-helicenes, [1] sometimes in multi-gram scale [3d-f]. Using diverse stereoselective or resolution methods, a great panel of enantiopure helical  $\pi$ -conjugated scaffolds can be accessed [3,4]. Concomitantly to the discovery of new efficient synthetic methodologies, experimental combined with theoretical studies of the steric, electronic, and optical properties of helicenes have shed new light to the potential applications of this class of inherently chiral molecules as chiral materials [5]. Indeed, the main property of helicenes is their helical structure which renders them chiral. Such inherently chiral topology combined with an extended  $\pi$ -conjugation provides helicenes with huge optical rotation (OR) values, intense electronic circularly dichroism (ECD) spectra [6] and substantial circularly polarized luminescence (CPL) [7a]. Strong chiroptical activity may find many applications in chiral materials [8]. The OR, ECD and CPL represent chiroptical properties which are characterized by differences between left- and right-circularly polarized light transmission, absorption and emission, respectively [9].

The development of functional devices at the molecular level has attracted considerable interest during the last decades [10]. Molecular switches, in which there is a switching between two molecular states, are based on bistability, which means that the molecule has two stable states and can be resting in one of them. There are also other requirements in the construction of chiroptical switches such as chemical stability, non-

destructive read-out, fast response times, reproducibility and fatigue resistance [11]. Interconversion of the two bistable chiral forms can result from responses of the chiral molecules to external stimuli such as heat, light, pressure, pH, chemicals, redox potential, solvent, ... (Scheme 1).

The contributions to the field of chiroptical switches are stimulated by their potential applications as molecular memory elements, or logic operators, in which data storage and processing are the ultimate goal [11]. For example, systems that possess switchable functionality may lead to new prospects in molecular information processing and storage [12]. Chiroptical switches have also found applications in the detection of a multitude of different analytes with a high level of sensitivity, in asymmetric catalysis to offer switchable stereoselectivity [13] and in molecular motors since chirality can provide unidirectionality and original kinds of motions [11]. On the other hand, devices displaying circularly polarized luminescence (CPL) are of great interest because CPL activity may be a powerful method for addressing encoded information (cryptography) or for preparing 3D displays [7b].

Several recent examples of chiroptical switches have used helicenes in their designs. They are detailed in the next sections which are organized according to the input responsible for the switching process, namely helicene-based switches triggered by *i*) light, *ii*) redox and *iii*) acid/base stimuli. Helicenes unique attributes allow them to display several advantages such as higher solubility than more planar aromatic structures and large variations in electronic properties and chiroptical properties upon breakage or modification of the  $\pi$ -conjugation. Stability is an important requirement for switches, solubility allows handling in solution, and the possibility of large reversible changes in properties upon stimulus confers facile read-out.

## Scheme 1.

### 2. Light-driven helicene-based chiroptical switches

Photoisomerization reactions of diverse chromophores (such as diarylethenes, spiropyrans, or azobenzenes) are good ways to photomodulate the chiroptical properties of a chiral molecule [11]. Diarylethenes and more thermally stable dithienylethenes (DTEs) are known to undergo reversible ring closure and opening upon irradiation with two different wavelengths, accompanied by an important variation of the optical properties [14]. With the use of appropriate chiral substituents, the cyclization can be diastereoselective and may be used in chiroptical switches [14,15]. A few examples of chiroptical switches bearing dithienylethenes and helicene moieties have been studied, taking advantage of these photochromic scaffolds to modulate the helical topology. In 1999, Dinescu *et al.* reported photochromic helical 1,2-dithienylethenes [16] that were built upon the rigid frame of dodecahydrophenantrene **1**, a thia[5]helicene analogue due to the *ortho*-fused multi-ring locked structure in the open form **1** (Scheme 2). The high molecular rigidity of the closed form **2** provided stability to the isomer formed after cyclization. The switching process consisted of photo-closing and photo-opening by irradiation at wavelengths corresponding to the absorption bands of the open ( $\lambda = 310$  nm) and closed ( $\lambda > 450$  nm) isomers. Although the authors did not study the process by chiroptical spectroscopy, they achieved a reversible thermally stable photochromism. Indeed, the colour of the benzene solutions changed from clear to yellow upon UV irradiation of the open form, and from yellow to colourless upon irradiation with visible light. The photochromic behaviour was also explored in an amorphous polymeric film. The authors attributed the efficiency of complete switching between these species to molecular rigidity and helical conformation and more than 10 cycles could be achieved in the absence of oxygen [16].

## Scheme 2.

In 2001, Branda and coworkers reported the incorporation of the DTE photochrome within thia[7]helicenes [17]. When irradiated at 410 nm, the open-form DTE scaffold **3** [17a] underwent a conrotatory ring-closing, yielding the thia[7]helicene architecture **4** (74% in the photostationary state). The photochemical regeneration of the open form by irradiating at 458 nm destroyed the extended thia[7]helicene backbone. The photoswitching activity was studied through the changes in the UV-vis absorption spectra of the racemic system. Later on, an enantioenriched version was developed by the same authors, by attaching chirality at the end of both arms through pinene derivatives (**5** in Scheme 3) [17b]. The photoswitchable behaviour of ring-opened and ring-closed forms was examined using their chiroptical properties (OR and ECD). The ring closure performed at 400 nm appeared 40 % effective in the photostationary state and revealed a high level of stereoselectivity since only one single stereoisomer *M*-**6** was obtained. The photoreaction appeared reversible with efficient ring opening at higher wavelengths without observable degradation. Because of a dominant chiral conformer, the ring-open system **5** displayed ECD and strong differences were observed in the ECD signal of the photostationary state **6**, as well as in the optical rotary dispersion (ORD) spectra (Scheme 3b,c). Therefore they satisfy the requirements of a successful chiroptical switch with large differences in the ECD and ORD spectral properties and stability of the ring-open and closed forms. This example nicely illustrates how the combination of an efficient photoresponsive molecular backbone and an inherently chiral architecture can greatly impact the environment and properties through efficient chiral induction processes.

### Scheme 3.

In 2007, Yokayama *et al.* developed similar dithienylethene photochromes with thiahelicene-like closed forms [18a]. In this case, the photoirradiation diastereoselectivity was achieved by introducing only one asymmetric carbon in the open form (**7**, Scheme 4). Very large differences in specific optical rotations between non-helicenic open form **7** and helicenic photostationary state **8** were obtained. The diastereoselectivity of the photochemical ring closure was analyzed as a balance between stronger steric/electronic repulsions and 1,3-allylic strains. For example, upon photoirradiation at 366 nm, the enantiopure chiral open form **9** yielded *M*-**10** with 57 % conversion and 90 % diastereomer excess [18b].

### Scheme 4.

Other photochromic systems than DTE's have been used in helicene chemistry. For example, Moorthy *et al.* developed racemic helicenes such as **11** incorporating a chromene moiety which exhibited an original photochromism process [19]. Indeed, upon light irradiation of colourless **11**, helical o-quinonoid intermediate **12** was formed and was responsible for the colour appearance and UV-vis absorption (Scheme 5) [19a]. Such systems were proposed as molecular logic gates with INHIBIT function for applications in optical data storage devices [19b].

### Scheme 5.

Azobenzenes have also been widely used as photoresponsive *cis-trans* compounds in the design of chiroptical switches [20]. Wang *et al.* [21] designed a [5]helicene analogue **13**, consisting of a helical *o*-terphenyl molecule grafted with a photoresponsive azobenzene moiety and an electroactive imide group, therefore acting as a dual-mode chiroptical molecular switch (Scheme 6). The strong specific rotation measured at 436 nm could be tuned through *trans-cis* photoisomerization of the azobenzene moiety using UV and visible light. Reversible electrochemical modulation (*vide infra*) between *trans-M-13* and [*trans-M-13*]<sup>•</sup> was also achieved through the reversible redox reaction occurring at the imide group. Large chiroptical read-out signals were observed during the redox cycles as indicated by the strong molar ellipticity changes at 454 nm (Scheme 6) [21]. Photomodulation studies were also conducted in the solid state, using a thin film of polycarbonate containing 2 wt % of *P-13*, where a switching behavior similar to that in solution was observed.

### Scheme 6.

### 3. Redox-driven helicene-based chiroptical switches

In redox-triggered chiroptical switches, the chiroptical properties can be modulated by oxidation or reduction [13, 22], induced either by an electrochemical potential or by chemical oxidizing/reducing agents. It is important that sub-products from chemical reagents and additives such as electrolytes do not interfere with the detection method. Polymers, coordination complexes and organic molecules have been used to display redox chiroptical switch behaviour [22]. It is indeed possible to obtain a strong chiroptical signal and to achieve good switching activity by using helical polymers with



chiral substituents or dopants. In coordination complexes, redox processes cause electronic changes at the metal and conformational changes in the ligands may occur which may be used in chiroptical switches. Finally, organic molecules can show important changes in their chiroptical properties upon oxidation/reduction in one or two-electron processes. The same principles are valid for the design of helicene-based redox-triggered chiroptical switches. Pioneering work in the electrochemical modification of helicene structures was achieved in 1993 by T. J. Katz *et al.* who prepared helicene oligomers *M*-(-)-**14** using cobaltocene's chemistry (Figure 1). These organometallic oligomers revealed efficient tuning of their ECD spectrum upon reduction of Co<sup>III</sup> to Co<sup>II</sup> [23].

### Figure 1.

Our group became involved in the field of chiroptical switches in 2010, when we started the investigation of platinahelicenes, which incorporate one or several platinum centers in their helical backbone [24]. These platinahelicenes, such as **15** in Scheme 7, display strong chiroptical properties and efficient phosphorescence at room temperature (r.t.), and the presence of the platinum ion allows for the tuning of their properties. Indeed, the oxidation of Pt<sup>II</sup> ion into Pt<sup>IV</sup> with iodine yielded enantiopure air-stable Pt<sup>IV</sup>-[6]helicenes *P*-**16**. The phosphorescence was quenched upon oxidation and the chiroptical properties (OR and ECD) were significantly modified (Scheme 7). The Pt<sup>IV</sup> species *P*-**16** could be reduced back to the Pt<sup>II</sup> complex *P*-**15** by using Zn powder, thus recovering the previous chiroptical properties. However, this Pt<sup>II</sup>/Pt<sup>IV</sup>-[6]helicene couple cannot be considered as a redox chiroptical switch since it doesn't display the reversibility and reproducibility requirements (purification steps needed).

### Scheme 7.

In 2012, we reported the first strictly-speaking helicene-based redox-triggered chiroptical switch [25], by designing a carbo[6]helicene grafted with a vinyl-ruthenium moiety **17** (Scheme 8). Interestingly, the electroactive metal centre which is  $\pi$ -conjugated with the helicene core through a vinyl moiety enhances the chiroptical properties and allows for their redox-tuning in a reversible way without modifying the *ortho*-fused  $\pi$ -system. By using a spectro-electrochemical cell (Optically Transparent Thin Layer Electrochemical - OTTLE cell) the switch showed multistep reversible oxidation / reduction steps at low potentials (0.2/-0.2 V vs. Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup>) and significant changes in the ECD at 340, 500 nm and in the near-infrared region (around 1000 nm), as a result of the electrochemical input (Scheme 8). Theoretical calculations indicate that the vinylhelicene ligand has an important role in these processes by supporting part of the charge density which is not totally localized on the metal atom, thus behaving as a non-innocent ligand. An enantiopure di(ruthenium-vinyl)helicene system was also prepared by us and its redox-switching activity was also examined [25].

### Scheme 8.

In 2010, Rajca *et al.* reported the oxidation of a [7]thiahelicene *P*-**18** (a helical  $\beta$ -oligothiophene, Figure 2) giving rise to a radical cation which was configurationally stable at r.t. [26]. The electrochemical oxidation was carried out in an OTTLE cell observing in real time the changes in the absorption spectra, ECD, and EPR (they observed the appearance of an unpaired electron). Although the bistability and

reversibility were not examined in details, these results paved the way to new organic redox-triggered chiroptical switches. Indeed, later on, several enantiopure organic redox-triggered chiroptical switches based on organic helicene derivatives were prepared and displayed good reversibility and reproducibility as observed by ECD spectroscopy in the UV-vis and NIR region. For example, in collaboration with Avarvari's group, we reported an organic redox chiroptical switch based on a helicenic skeleton fused with an electroactive tetrathiafulvalene (TTF) moiety (*M-19*, Figure 2) [27]. Stable radical-cation species [*M-19*]<sup>•+</sup> were formed upon oxidation and the system displayed redox-tuneable chiroptical properties. The shifts and changes in ECD (in UV-vis and NIR region) were totally recovered over several cycles of electrochemical oxidation/reduction in an OTTLE cell, demonstrating the efficiency of non-metallic electroactive helicenes as chiroptical switches. A new kind of metal-free redox-triggered helicene-based chiroptical switch was recently reported by our group and Diederich *et al.* [28]. It consisted of a 1,2-*ortho*-quinone [6]helicene *P-20* (Figure 2) that could be reduced to the stable semiquinone radical anion [*P-20*]<sup>•-</sup> and oxidized back reversibly. The changes in ECD and UV-vis absorption were followed by spectro-electrochemistry, and the switching was reversible over several cycles. Interestingly, the reduced semiquinone species was able to recognize the two enantiomers of chiral binaphthyl phosphoric acid. This diastereoselective process was evidenced by ENDOR experiments [28]. Note that in both examples **19** and **20**, significant intramolecular charge transfers have been found to be responsible for the strong optical modifications.

### Figure 2.

Teply and coworkers have studied the electrochemical behaviour of configurationally stable helical-shaped condensed N-heteropolyaromatics named helquats, such as **21** in

Scheme 9, which consist of a structural combination of helicenes and viologens [29]. With these structures, they reported the most intense chiroptical switching response in the field of helicenoids to date [29b,c]. The system works at three stages, with two consecutive reductions from di-cation, mono-cation to the fully reduced neutral form. The radical cation formation upon first reduction or oxidation was monitored by EPR spectroscopy. The electrochemical transformation caused very large changes in the ECD spectra. The cycling between reduction and oxidation potentials even caused changes in the signs of ECD bands or an ON/OFF switching of the ECD signal depending on the read-out channel selected (wavelength) [29b].

### Scheme 9.

While the former examples did not display any changes in their molecular geometry, a series of redox chiroptical switches based on the electrochemical C-C bond formation/breaking has been developed by Suzuki and collaborators since 2001 [30,5a]. Such systems consist in a closed form, a dihydro[5]helicene derivative with intrinsic helical chirality, and an open one corresponding to a biaryl compound with axial chirality. For instance, the dihydro[5]helicenes *P-22* was opened by two-electron oxidation to a stable axially chiral and strongly coloured dicationic species *P-23* (Scheme 10a). Upon two-electron reduction, a good reversibility and bistability was achieved, taking into account the importance of the configurational stability and low racemization in the process. Between the two states, large differences in the UV-vis and ECD spectra were observed [30a,b]. The same authors investigated these systems as multimodal switches. For example, in a multi-input/multi-output system, they investigated fluorescent dihydro[5]helicene derivative *P-24* with appropriate aromatic

substituents, that upon oxidation is stereospecifically converted into the binaphthyl dication derivative *P*-**25** (Scheme 10b) that is no longer fluorescent and which displays different UV-vis and ECD spectra [30e]. This open oxidized species also showed solvatochromism, with different colours and ECD spectra depending on the polarity of the solvent. Therefore they have a three-way-output response system upon electrochemical input (UV-vis, ECD, fluorescence) and the system is also considered as a multi-input one because the solvent could tune the properties in UV-vis and ECD spectra. Finally, Suzuki *et al.* reported similar bistable chiroptical switches based on a neutral binaphthyl diene as the open form, that closed upon oxidation to a dicationic dihydro[5]helicene [30c,d,f]. For example, they described in 2008 a molecular system with three states [30f]. Binaphthyl diene *M*-**26** was oxidized to stable dicationic helicene-type (*M,R,R*)-**27**, and this second state could be converted into fluorescent species (*M,R,R*)-**28** by treatment with NaHCO<sub>3</sub> (Scheme 10c). The fluorescent helicene-type state could be converted back to the dication by addition of acid. This is a case of a four-ways output response system (UV-vis, ECD, fluorescence and fluorescence detected ECD - FDCE) with electrochemical and pH inputs (*vide infra*).

### Scheme 10.

#### 4. Acid-base triggered helicene-based chiroptical switches

To our knowledge, very few examples of acid-base triggered helicene-based chiroptical switches have been reported to date [29c,30f,31,32]. Our group reported enantiopure osmium-vinylhelicene complex *P*-**29** and an osmium-carbene helicene *P*-**30** that are reversibly inter-convertible by using an acid or a base and therefore act as an acid-base chiroptical switch [31]. We could indeed achieve the formation of the

osmium-carbene helicene derivative *P*-**30** by means of HCl addition, and the recovery of the osmium-vinylhelicene complex *P*-**29** by adding Et<sub>3</sub>N (Scheme 11). Upon such transformations, the OR values and ECD bands significantly change due to the modification of the electronic interaction between the osmium center and  $\pi$ -helicenic platform. Although the low stability of these organometallic osmium-helicene complexes did not allow very good reversibility and reproducibility, this work was a good proof of concept for the use of carbenic complexes as acid-base chiroptical switches.

### Scheme 11.

Recently, we also reported a multiresponsive acid/base chiroptical switch [32] based on 2-pyridyl-aza[6]helicene scaffold **31** (Scheme 12) acting as a helicenic 2,2'-bipyridine system which can be protonated through its bipyridyl core. Upon progressive addition of acid aliquots, isosbestic points were found in the UV-vis and ECD spectra, and double protonation occurred. Strong changes in emission wavelengths were observed, with a 160 nm red-shift of the fluorescence, while CPL activity remained similar ( $g_{\text{CPL}} \sim 2.5 \times 10^{-3}$  [9] for both neutral and protonated *P*-**31**). The reverse process could be achieved by using a base, thus yielding an efficient switch with multimodal read-out (UV-vis, ECD, fluorescence, CPL). The corresponding cycloplatinated complexes *P*- and *M*-**32** (see Scheme 12) displayed UV-vis, ECD, r.t. phosphorescence and CPL activity and enabled the comparison of their switching abilities with organic ligands *P*- and *M*-**31**. Upon gradual monoprotection of the free pyridyl group in **32**, clear isosbestic points were also found in UV-vis absorption and ECD spectra. However, emission remained at a similar wavelength with a slight increase in the

dissymmetry factor ( $g_{\text{CPL}} \sim 2 \times 10^{-3}$ , for protonated *P*-**32**, twice as high as the neutral form *P*-**32**, Scheme 12). Thus this example enabled us to compare the CPL switching behavior of a fluorescent organic species and a phosphorescent organometallic one [32]. Note that switchable CPL functionality may have important applications in the field of molecular information processing and storage [7b].

### Scheme 12.

Finally, very recently, Teply *et al.* developed a helquat system displaying pH-switchability. Indeed, by using phenol substituents in the helquat structure, the changes in pH triggered very important and reversible changes in the ECD response [29c].

## 5. Conclusions and perspectives

In this review, we have presented the few examples of helicene-based chiroptical switches that have been reported to date in the literature. The reviewed examples are mainly triggered by light, redox or acid/base inputs, but there are alternative stimuli such as the solvent. In most of the cases the read-out signal used to compare the chiroptical properties of the two binary states is the ECD response but other chiroptical methods can be used such as FDCD, ORD or CPL activity. Different wavelengths can be used, from the UV to the near-IR regions and large differences in chiroptical responses can be accomplished. Another important feature is the possibility to have multimodal input accompanied with read-out systems.

Further developments of helicene-based switches may allow these chiral systems to be used in devices. Such an example has already been demonstrated by Katz *et al.* who studied electro-optic switching of helicene derivative forming a nematic liquid

crystalline phase [33]. Future progresses are also predictable in the area of luminescent materials and the use of CPL as a read-out signal combined with the ECD and OR activity, which could be a powerful method for addressing encoded information (cryptography) or for 3D displays. Multi-output systems are very appealing as prototypes of molecular logic operators since they may act as parallel operating logic elements. Further enhanced chiroptical switches are desired that feature higher differences in chiroptical properties between the different states. Only a limited number of examples have been reported to date but the doors are already open in electroactive, purely-organic and metallahelicenes, and the field will undoubtedly develop to take advantage of their potential.

More important goals of this research would be to conceive chiral materials displaying some functions that can be tuned upon an external stimulus, *e.g.* systems mimicking fundamental biological processes. In addition, being able to modulate a catalytic activity or a chiral recognition process by an external stimulus is a fascinating area of research. Finally, production of motion on a molecular level may pave the way to new models of molecular machines [11,12], as has been nicely illustrated in Feringa's helical unidirectional molecular motors (Figure 3a) [34] and in Kelly's triptycene-[4]helicene systems which act as molecular "ratchets" (Figure 3b,c) [35].

### **Figure 3.**

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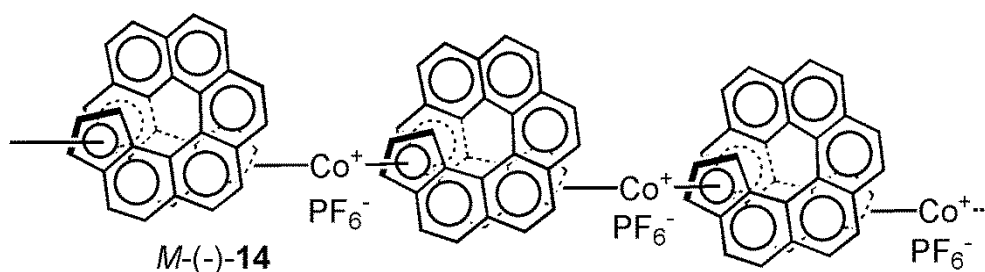
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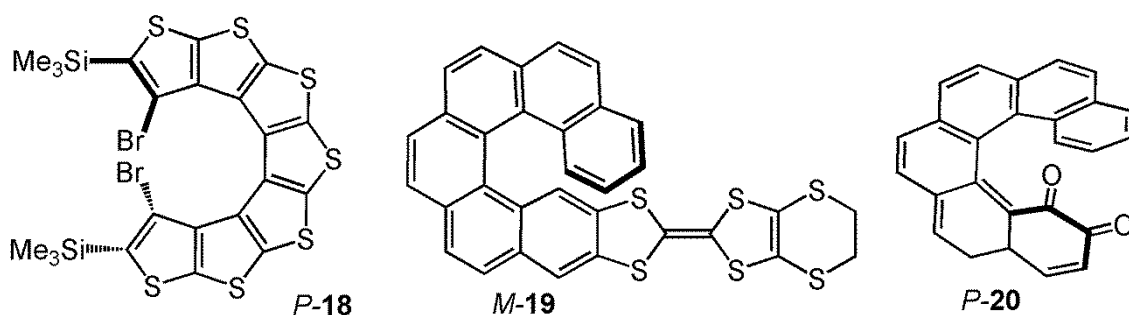
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## Schemes and Figures

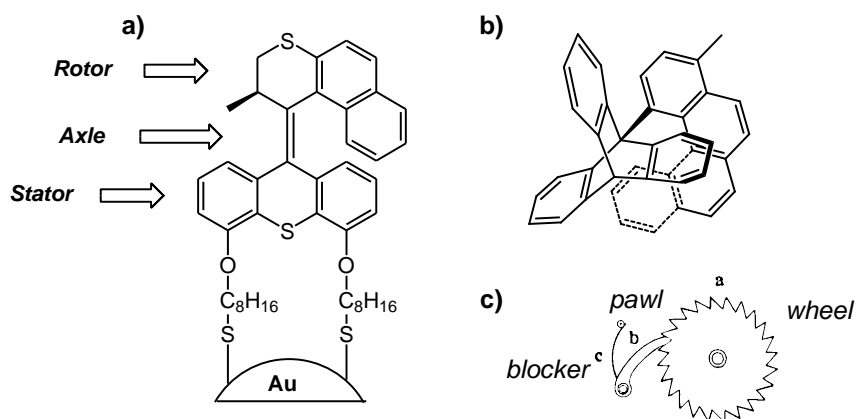
**Figure 1.** First example of oligomeric organometallic  $\text{Co}^{\text{III}}$  complexes  $M(-)-\mathbf{14}$  bearing bis- $\eta^5$ -helicenic ligands and displaying redox-tuning of the ECD [23].



**Figure 2.** Examples of organic helicenes bearing electro-active moieties for the development of redox-triggered chiroptical switches [26-28].

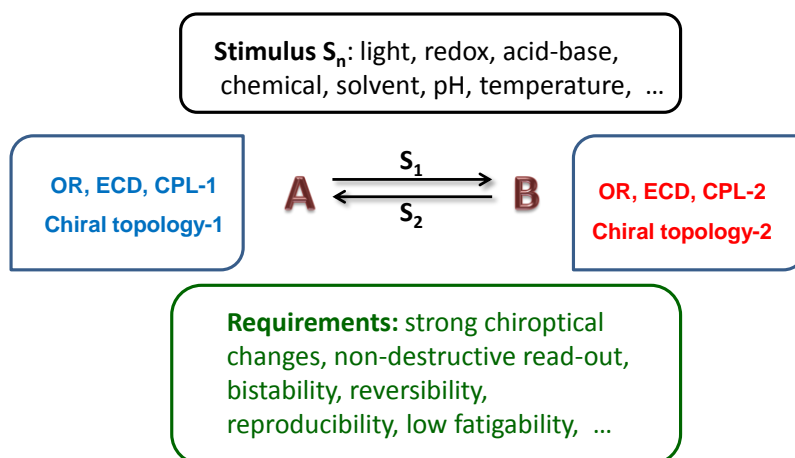


**Figure 3.** Two examples of molecular devices prepared from helical molecular systems [34,35].

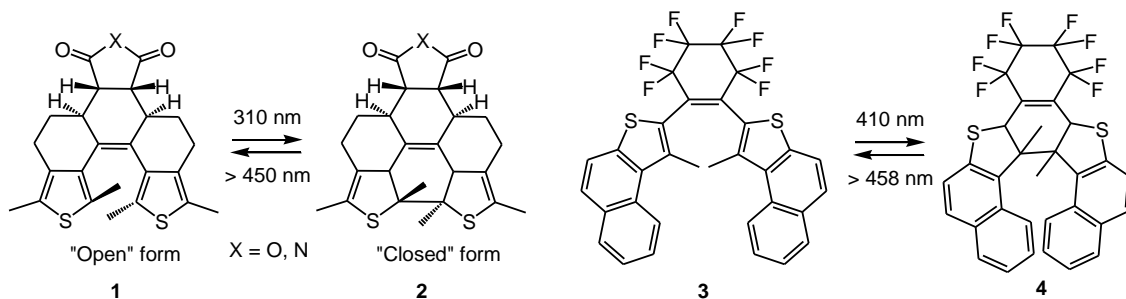




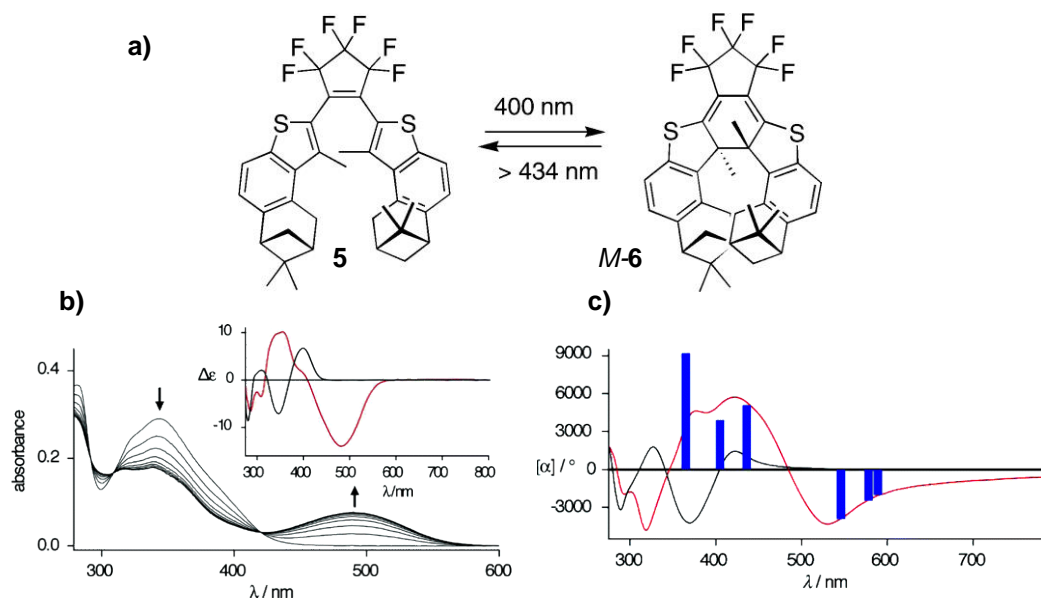
**Scheme 1.** Principle of an efficient chiroptical switch.



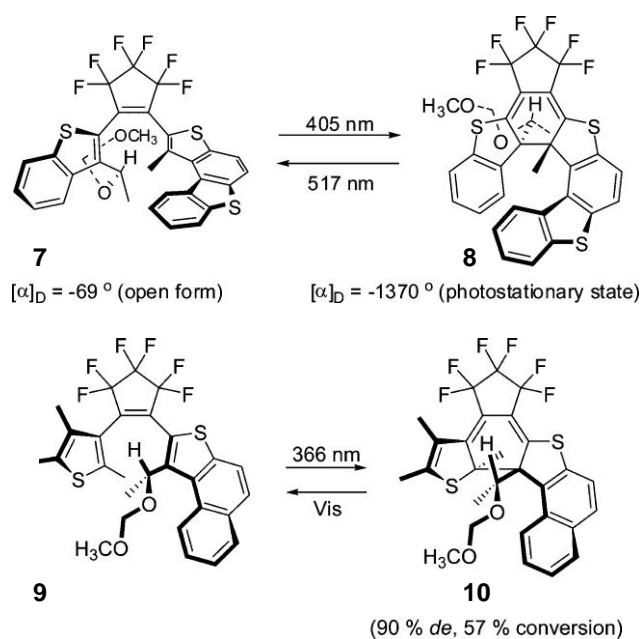
**Scheme 2.** Racemic photochromic dithienylethene switches based on a thia[5]- or thia[7]-helicenic derivatives either in the open (**1,3**) [16] or in the closed forms (**2,4**) [17a].



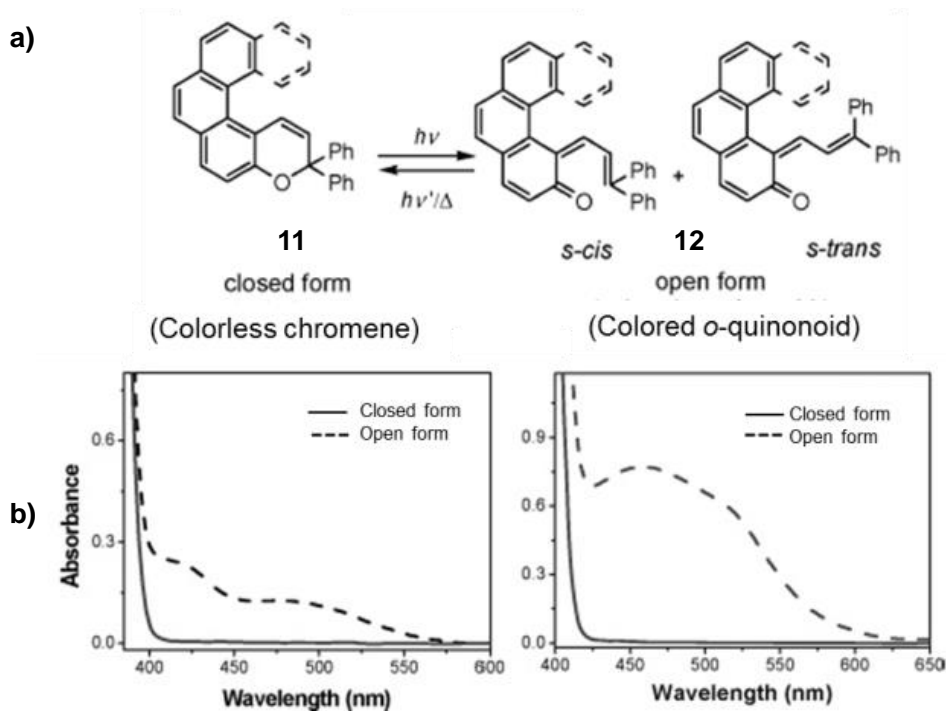
**Scheme 3.** a) Stereoselective photocyclization of chiral dithienylethene **5** to thia[7]helicene *M-6* [17b]. b) Changes in the UV-vis absorption spectra of a benzene solution of open-form upon irradiation at 400 nm light. Insert: ECD spectra of open form in benzene (black trace) and of the photostationary state (red trace) generated at 400 nm light. c) Optical rotatory dispersion of open and closed forms (black and red traces respectively). Adapted with permission from ref 17b.



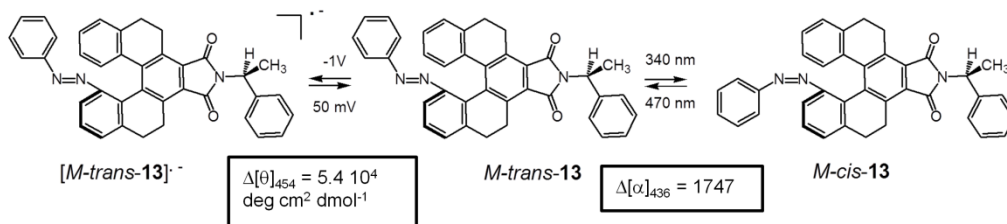
**Scheme 4.** Helicenoid diarylethenes developed by Yokayama *et al.*. Adapted with permission from ref. 18a,b.



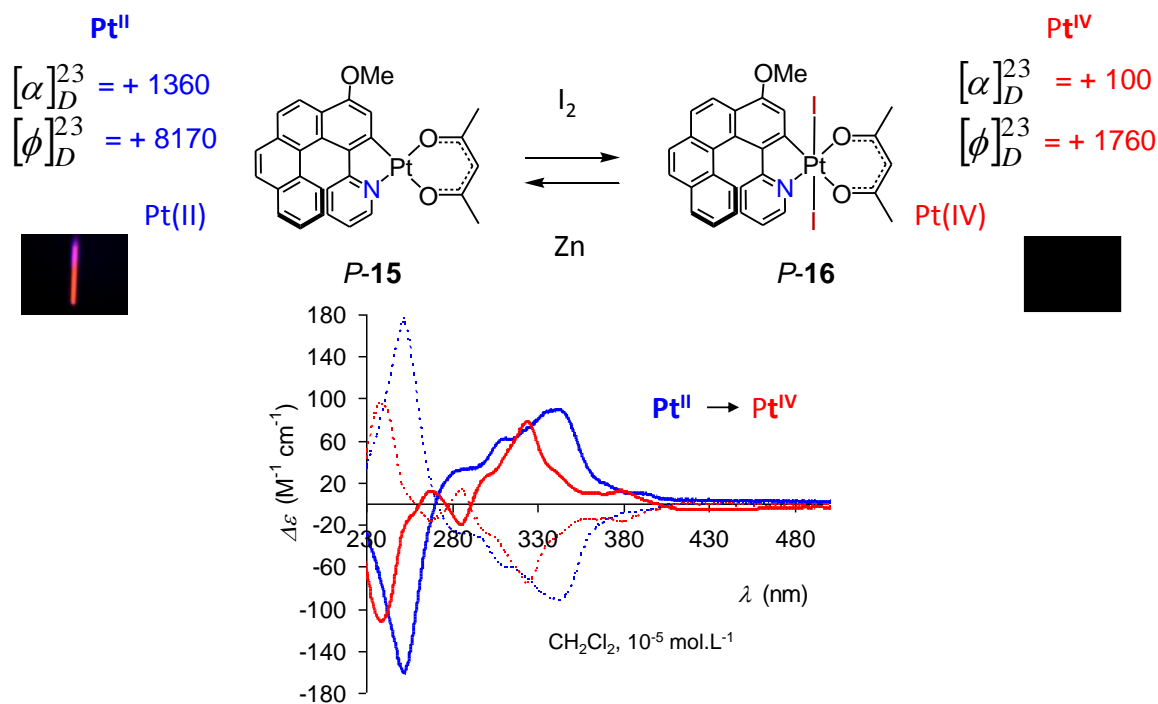
**Scheme 5.** a) Helicene-chromene developed by Moorthy's group [19]. b) UV-vis spectra of [4]helicene (left) and [5]helicene (right) chromene before (closed form) and after photoirradiation (open form). Adapted with permission from ref. 19a.



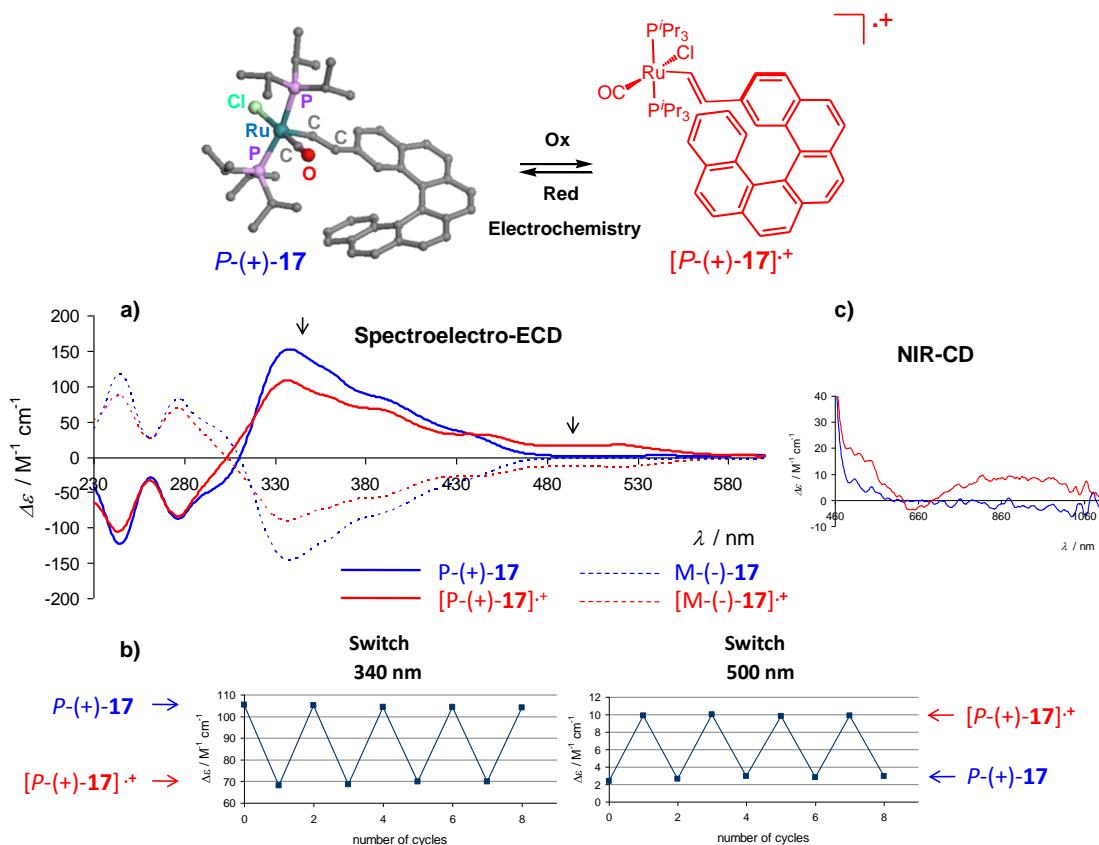
**Scheme 6.** Dual photochromic and redox chiroptical switch developed by Wang et al. in its *cis* and *trans* azobenzene forms [21].



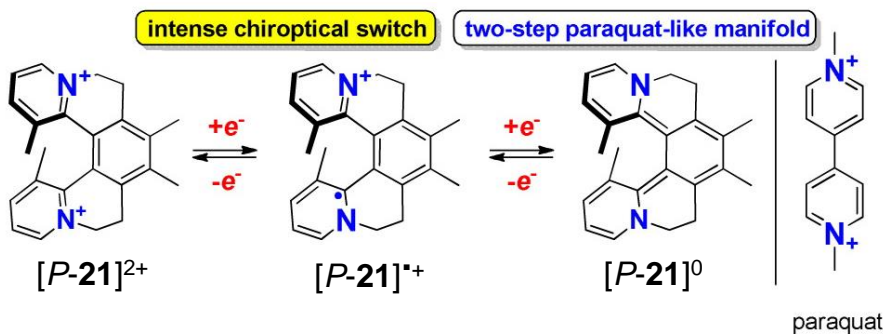
**Scheme 7.** Redox tuning of the chiroptical properties (specific and molar rotations and ECD) and luminescence of platina[6]helicene **15** [24].



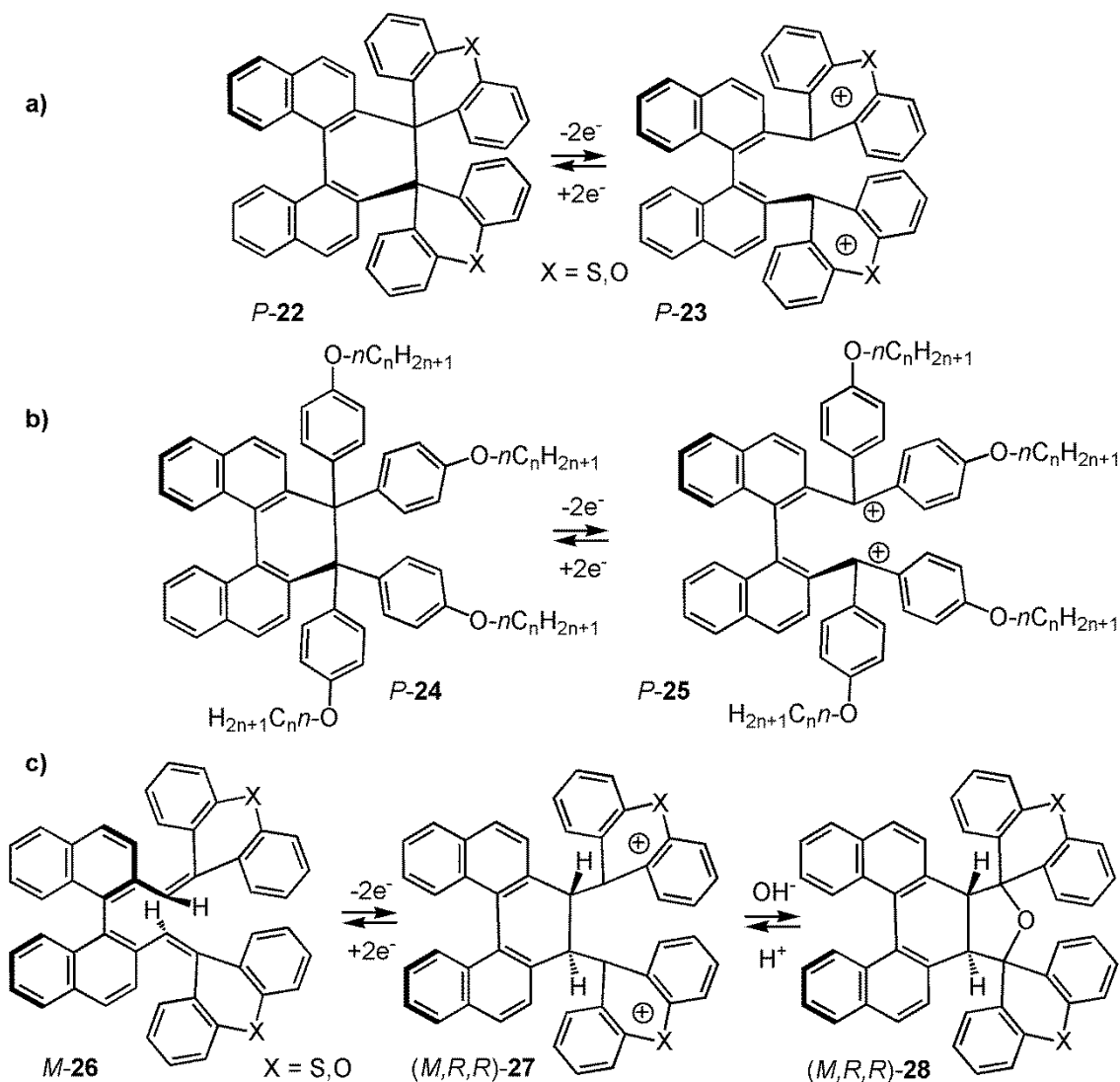
**Scheme 8.** ECD spectrum of the Ru-vinylhelicene *P*-**17** (blue) and of its oxidized species  $[P\text{-}17]^{\bullet+}$  (red) in dichloroethane at r.t. b) Redox chiroptical switching observed by ECD spectroscopy at 340 and 500 nm. c) NIR-CD of neutral and oxidized species [25].



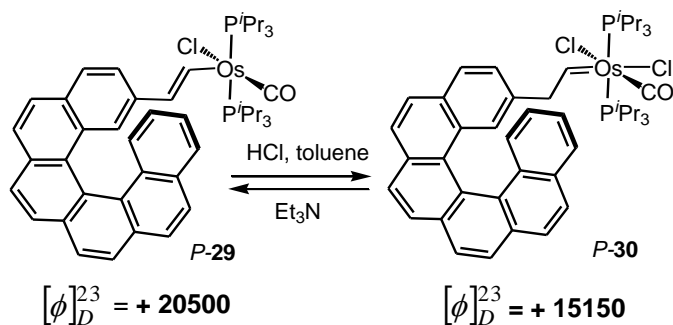
**Scheme 9.** Helicene-paraquat derivative **21** developed by Teply *et al.* that display strong chiroptical redox-switching activity. Adapted with permission from ref. 29b.



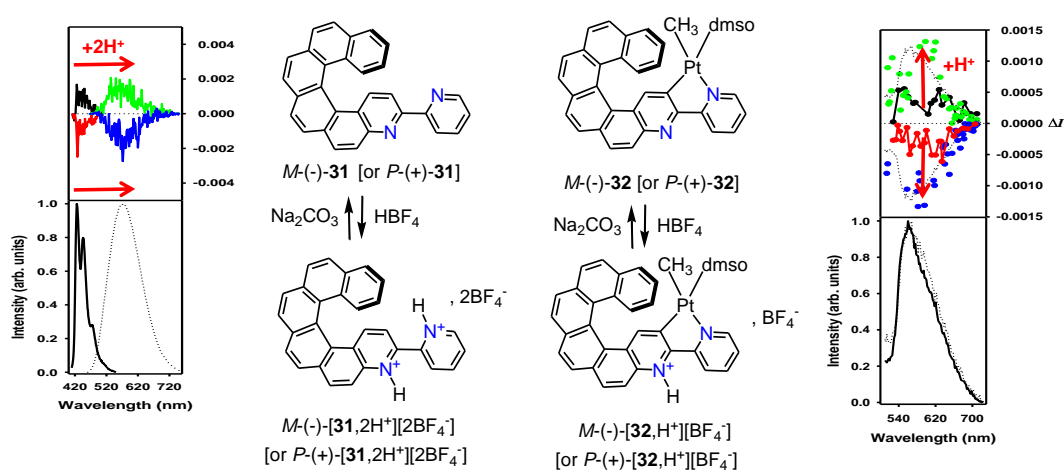
**Scheme 10.** Selected binaphthyl/[5]helicenic molecular systems developed by Suzuki *et al.* which act as multimodal chiral switches [30].



**Scheme 11.** Acid/base-triggered switch based on a helicene-vinyl-osmium/ helicene-vinyl-osmium binary system [31].



**Scheme 12.** Acid-base triggered switching of CPL of enantiopure *P* and *M* organic (**31**) and organometallic (**32**) helicene-bipyridine derivatives. Left: CPL (top) and total emission (bottom) of fluorescent 3-(2-pyridyl)-4-aza[6]helicene *P*-**31** (black), and *M*-**31** (red) enantiomers to respectively *P*-[**31**,2H<sup>+</sup>][2BF<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>] (green) and *M*-[**31**,2H<sup>+</sup>][2BF<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>] (blue). Left: CPL (top) and total emission (bottom) of phosphorescent complex *P*-**32** (black), and *M*-**32** (red) enantiomers to respectively *P*-[**32**,H<sup>+</sup>][BF<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>] (green) and *M*-[**32**,H<sup>+</sup>][BF<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>] (blue) [32].



## Graphical abstract

