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Photolatent organic catalysts for delayed ring opening polymerization

AUTHORS

Patrick LACROIX-DESMAZES / INSTITUT CHARLES GERHARDT, ICGM UNIV MONTPELLIER, CNRS, ENSCM, UMR 5253, ICGM-IAM, 240 AVENUE DU PROFESSEUR EMILE JEANBRAU, MONTPELLIER Emeline PLACET / INSTITUT CHARLES GERHARDT, ICGM UNIV MONTPELLIER, CNRS, ENSCM, UMR 5253, ICGM-IAM, 240 AVENUE DU PROFESSEUR EMILE JEANBRAU, MONTPELLIER Julien PINAUD / INSTITUT CHARLES GERHARDT, ICGM UNIV MONTPELLIER, CNRS, ENSCM, UMR 5253,

ICGM-IAM, PLACE EUGÈNE BATAILLON, MONTPELLIER

PURPOSE OF THE ABSTRACT

Photolatent polymerizations open the way for applications where a delayed reaction and/or a spatial control is required. The polymerization begins "on demand" when and where the irradiation is applied. Photolatent polymerizations developed so far usually involve radical processes that are sensitive to oxygen, limiting industrial applications. In order to get biodegradable, biocompatible and biosourced materials prepared with this technology, we decided to develop photolatent ring-opening polymerization (ROP) of cyclic esters and other cyclic monomers. While the ROP of cyclic esters is commonly catalysed by organometallic catalysts such as tin(II) 2-ethylhexanoate, organic catalysts such as guanidines, amidines and N-heterocyclic carbenes (NHC) have also been used effectively, then avoiding the presence of metallic residue in the final polymer. [1] This led us to the challenging development of photolatent NHCs. We recently reported the first photolatent NHC in the form of a tetraphenylborate imidazolium salt. [2] The expected carbon disulfide NHC adduct was isolated after the addition of carbon disulfide in an irradiated solution of this photolatent NHC. The photolatent NHC combined with a ruthenium precursor allowed the fast photopolymerization of norbornene after UV irradiation via a ring opening metathesis mechanism. However, this first generation of photolatent NHC revealed to be inefficient for the ROP of cyclic esters. A second generation of photolatent NHC was thus developed with counter anions known to undergo a photodecarboxylation such as ketoprofenate. [3] With such photobase generators (PBGs), ROP of lactide in solution was successfully achieved after irradiation at 365 nm (Figure 1). Obtained polymers (poly(lactide), PLA) were carefully characterized by SEC, 1H NMR and MALDI TOF analyses. [4]

Finally, an interesting comparative study between the new photolatent NHC and a photobase generator (PBG) releasing triazabicyclodecene was conducted. Differences in the activity of the two systems were investigated (Figure 2).

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FIGURES



FIGURE 1

Figure 1Photo-initiated ring-opening polymerization ofL-lactide with TBDH+.keto- as photobase generator

FIGURE 2

Figure 2

Evolution of monomer conversion (followed by 1H NMR) for the photopolymerization of lactide (in CH2Cl2) with the two PBGs after 10 min UV irradiation at 365 nm

100

80

KEYWORDS

ring-opening polymerization | photobase generators | N-heterocyclic carbenes | lactones

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