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Direct Reduction of Alcohols: Highly Chemoselective Reducing System for Secondary or Tertiary Alcohols Using Chlorodiphenylsilane with a Catalytic Amount of Indium Trichloride

Makoto Yasuda, Yoshiyuki Onishi, Masako Ueba, Takashi Miyai, and Akio Baba*

Department of Molecular Chemistry, Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University, 2-1 Yamadaoka, Suita, Osaka 565-0871, Japan

baba@ap.chem.eng.osaka-u.ac.jp

Received June 21, 2001

The direct reduction of alcohols using chlorodiphenylsilane as a hydride source in the presence of a catalytic amount of indium trichloride is described. Benzylic alcohols, secondary alcohols, and tertiary alcohols were effectively reduced to give the corresponding alkanes in high yields. A compound bearing both primary and secondary hydroxyl groups was reduced only at the secondary site to afford the primary alcohol after workup with Bu₄NF. This system showed high chemoselectivity only for the hydroxyl group while not reducing other functional groups that are readily reduced by standard reducing systems. Thus alcohols bearing ester, chloro, bromo, or nitro groups, which are sensitive to LiAlH₄ or Zn/H⁺, were selectively reduced only at the hydroxyl sites by the chlorodiphenylsilane/InCl₃ system. NMR studies revealed the reaction course. The hydrodiphenylsilyl ether is initially formed and then, with $InCl_3$ acting as a Lewis acid, forms an oxonium complex, which accelerates the desiloxylation with donation of the hydrogen to the carbon.

Introduction

Alcohols are versatile organic compounds reagents and can be used as precursors for other classes of organic molecules in synthetic chemistry. A representative transformation of alcohols is deoxygenation to alkane. Since a hydroxyl group is a poor leaving group, it should be generally activated before treating with a reducing reagent. Tosylation or thiocarboxylation are generally employed for activation.^{1,2} Although a few direct reductions of alcohols have been reported, there are some problems to be solved. Nickel-catalyzed hydrogenation of alcohols requires high temperature and pressure (250 °C, 150 atm).³ Only alcohols that can generate stable carbocations are reduced using strong acidic media.⁴ The hydride reagents generally need the aid of excess amounts of Lewis acids.⁵ In this context, the development of an efficient reducing system for direct deoxygenation of alcohols under catalytic and mild conditions is strongly desired. We have recently reported the deoxygenation of alcohols using chlorodimethylsilane with a catalytic amount of a Lewis acid.⁶ The reducing system is strictly limited to only benzylic alcohols.

In this paper, we report the effective methodology for direct reduction of alcohols, in which a wide variety of secondary or tertiary alcohols are chemoselectively reduced to alkanes.⁷ Additionally, this direct pathway shows the selective reduction that took place only at the hydroxyl moiety without influence on other functional groups.

Results and Discussion

Direct Reduction of Alcohols by Hydrosilane/ **Indium Chloride.** We chose a simple aliphatic alcohol **1a** for an initial trial to investigate the reducing system. Our previous system,⁶ chlorodimethylsilane/InCl₃, did not work, as shown in Table 1, entry 7.8 As the reactivity of hydrosilane strongly depends on the substituent on the silicon center, a variety of hydrosilanes were tested. Among hydrosilanes examined, chlorodiphenylsilane showed high activity with a catalytic amont of InCl₃ at refluxing temperature in dichloroethane (entry 1).⁹ The reaction using chlorodiphenylsilane without InCl₃ gave a low yield of decane 2 (entry 2).¹⁰ Neither Group 13 catalyst, AlCl₃, nor BF₃·OEt₂, was effective with chlorodiphenylsilane (entries 3 and 4) probably because of their instability to alcohols. Indium trichloride, on the other hand, tolerates protic conditions and can in fact be used

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⁽⁸⁾ The reaction under higher temperature was not carried out because of the low boiling point of chlorodimethylsilane (ca. 35 °C).

⁽⁹⁾ In some cases, phenylsilanes are reported to have higher reactivity than alkylsilanes. Matsuda, I.; Fukuta, Y.; Tsuchihashi, T.; Nagashima, H.; Itoh, K. Organometallics 1997, 16, 4327–4345.
 (10) As is well-known, LiAlH₄, NaBH₄, or Bu₃SnH were not effective

at all as hydride sources, although they are generally used for reduction of the corresponding tosylates or thiocarbonates in an ionic or radical manner. Barton, D. H. R.; McCombie S. W. J. Chem. Soc., Perkin Trans. 1 1975, 1574–1585 and ref 1.

Table 1. Direct Reduction of 2-Decanol^a

ſ	ОН	Reduci	ng system	\sim				
1a 2a								
entry	hydrosilane	catalyst	solvent	<i>T</i> (°C)	yield (%)			
1	Ph ₂ SiHCl	InCl ₃	CH ₂ ClCH ₂ Cl	80	76			
2	Ph ₂ SiHCl		CH ₂ ClCH ₂ Cl	80	5			
3	Ph ₂ SiHCl	AlCl ₃	CH ₂ ClCH ₂ Cl	80	23			
4	Ph ₂ SiHCl	BF ₃ ·OEt ₂	CH ₂ ClCH ₂ Cl	80	tr			
5	Ph ₂ SiH ₂	InCl ₃	CH ₂ ClCH ₂ Cl	80	19			
6	Et ₃ SiH	InCl ₃	CH ₂ ClCH ₂ Cl	80	0			
7	Me ₂ SiHCl	InCl ₃	CH ₂ ClCH ₂ Cl	rt	0			
8	Ph ₂ SiHCl	InCl ₃	hexane	70	33			
9	Ph ₂ SiHCl	InCl ₃	benzene	80	20			
10	Ph ₂ SiHCl	InCl ₃	THF	63	0			
11	Ph ₂ SiHCl	InCl ₃	acetonitrile	80	0			

 a All reactions were carried out in solvent (1 mL) using hydrosilane (2.0 mmol), 2-decanol ${\bf 1a}$ (1.0 mmol), and catalyst (0.05 mmol) for 4 h.

even in water.¹¹ The indium trichloride catalyst was not effective for other silanes (entries 5–7). The choice of solvent is important since hexane, benzene, THF, and acetonitrile gave low yields (entries 8–11). These characteristic results prompted us to develop a Ph₂SiHCl/ InCl₃ system for direct reduction of alcohols.

Table 2 summarizes the direct reduction of various alcohols. Benzhydrol (1b) was effectively reduced at room temperature to give diphenylmethane in 87% yield in dichloromethane (entry 1). Reducing the amount of silane to 1 equiv also gave a satisfactory yield (entry 2). With no addition of InCl₃, the yield was significantly lower (entry 3). Other benzylic alcohols 1c-e in entries 4-6were also effectively reduced to give the corresponding alkanes in high yields. The chloride moiety in 1e was not affected by these conditions, and only the product 2e via reduction at the hydroxyl site was formed (entry 6). Aliphatic secondary or tertiary alcohols were reduced at 80 °C (entries 7–11). When 1,1-diphenyl-2-propanol (1) was used as a substrate, only the phenyl-rearranged product 2j was obtained in high yield (entry 12). The phenyl-rearranged product suggests that a carbocationic species may be present in the reduction process. For the primary alcohol 1k, an ether-type product was detected in the NMR spectra (entry 13). Since the starting alcohol was recovered after workup with Bu₄NF, the silyl ether would be mainly produced in this case. This result means that the reducing system could distinguish classes of alcohols. In fact, reduction occurred only at the secondary alcohol site in the treatment of 1-phenyl-1,4-butanediol (11), and the primary alcohol 21 was obtained in 53% yield after workup with Bu₄NF (entry 14). When 4 equiv of the silane was used, the yield was increased to 76% (entry 15)

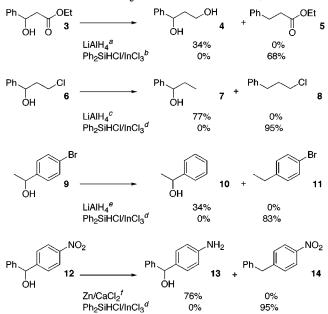
Chemoselective Reduction of Functionalized Alcohols. This reducing system was found to show high chemoselectivity for only hydroxyl groups even in the presence of sensitive functional groups that are readily reduced by standard reducing systems. The reactions in Scheme 1 point out the unique reactivity of the Ph₂SiHCl/ InCl₃ system. While the hydroxyl ester **3** gave the diol **4** in the reaction using LiAlH₄, the Ph₂SiHCl/InCl₃ system achieved the deoxygenation without ester reduction to afford ethyl ester **5** without **4**. Interestingly, when our

Table 2. Direct Reduction of Various Alcohols^a

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entr	y R-OH		solvent	T(°C)	<i>t</i> (h)	product	yiel	d (%)	
1 2 ^b 3 ^c	Ph Ph OH	1b	$\begin{array}{c} CH_2CI_2\\ CH_2CI_2\\ CH_2CI_2 \end{array}$	rt rt rt	2 2 2	PhPh	2b	87 76 15	
4	Ph OH	1c	CH ₂ Cl ₂	rt	1	Ph	2c	88	
5	Ph OH	1d	CH ₂ Cl ₂	rt	1	Ph	2d	90	
6	\square	ОН	CH ₂ Cl ₂	rt	2	CI	/	77	
	CI- 🔨	1e					2e		
7	OH Ph	1f	CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI	80	6	Ph	2f	54	
8	OH Ph	1g	CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI	80	3	Ph	2g	99	
9	Do	H 1h	CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI	80	3	D	2h	99	
10 ;	2-decanol	1a	CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI	80	4	decane	2a	76	
11 4	4-decanol	1i	CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI	80	4	decane	2a	74	
12	Ph Ph OH	1j	CH2CICH2CI	80	1	Ph Ph	2j	92	
13	Ph	.ОН 1k	CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI	80	5	Ph	2k	0	
14 ^d 15 ^e	Ph OH	∕∩он 1I	CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI CH ₂ CICH ₂ CI	80 80	3 3	Ph	`он 2I	53 76	

^{*a*} All reactions were carried out in solvent (1 mL) using Ph_2SiHCl (2.0 mmol), alcohol (1.0 mmol), and $InCl_3$ (0.05 mmol). ^{*b*} Ph_2SiHCl (1.0 mmol) was used. ^{*c*} $InCl_3$ was not added. ^{*d*} Workup with Bu_4NF (80 °C, 1 h). ^{*e*} Ph_2SiHCl (4.0 mmol) was used.

previous system, Me₂SiHCl/InCl₃,⁶ was employed instead of Ph₂SiHCl/InCl₃, chlorodehydroxylation unexpectedly took place to give ethyl 3-chloro-3-phenylpropanoate as a sole product in 76% yield. Although the difference of the reactivities in these silanes is not clear yet at this stage, this result undoubtedly shows the effectiveness of Ph₂SiHCl for reduction of alcohols. The reduction of chloro alcohol 6 with LiAlH₄ removed the chlorine and gave only alcohol 7, and the reduction of the chloro alcohol 6 with Ph₂SiHCl/InCl₃ removed the hydroxyl group and gave compound 8. The *p*-bromophenethyl alcohol 9 was debrominated in the reduction with LiAlH₄ to give alcohol 10. The silane/InCl₃ system, in contrast, afforded chemoselective reduction of the hydroxyl group to give bromo compound 11. The nitro-substituted benzhydrol 12 was reduced at the nitro group to the corresponding amine by Zn/CaCl₂,¹² while the treatment with LiAlH₄ resulted in recovery of 12. The

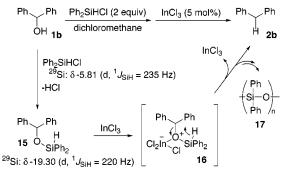


^a THF, 0 °C, 0.5 h. ^b CH₂ClCH₂Cl, 50 °C, 0.5 h. ^c THF, 0 °C, 1 h \rightarrow 63 °C, 2 h. ^d CH₂Cl₂, rt, 3 h. ^e THF, 0 °C, 1 h \rightarrow 63 °C, 2 h. ^f EtOH/H₂O, 80 °C, 3 h.

 $Ph_2SiHCl/InCl_3$ system smoothly reduced only the alcohol and provided only the nitro diarylmethane **14** in high yield. These results show that the Si–In system provides an unusual and useful reducing reagent in selective organic syntheses.

NMR Study of Hydrosilane/InCl₃ System. NMR studies were performed to examine the reaction course. The mixing of benzhydrol and chlorodiphenylsilane in CD₂Cl₂ spontaneously led to disappearance of the signals of benzhydrol with generation of new signals at δ ⁽¹H) 6.07 ppm and δ ⁽¹³C) 64.15 ppm, which were correlated in the C-H COSY spectrum.¹³ In ²⁹Si NMR, this solution showed two doublet signals at -5.81 ppm (J = 235 Hz) and -19.30 ppm (J = 220 Hz).¹⁴ Since the former is ascribed to unreacted chlorodiphenylsilane, the latter was found to correspond to a new species. These results clearly suggest the formation of the hydrodiphenylsilyl ether 15 and HCl¹⁵ and not the chlorodiphenylsilyl ether caused by dehydrogenation.¹⁶ The insolubility of HCl in dichloromethane or dichloroethane caused the fine bubbles of HCl that evaporated from the reaction system.¹⁷ This phenomenon explains the interesting solvent effect shown in Table 1. The addition of 5 mol % of InCl₃ to this mixture gave diphenylmethane (2b). InCl₃, acting as a Lewis acid, could accelerate the desiloxylation by forming





the oxonium complex **16**. InCl₃ could be regenerated with the formation of the siloxane, which in fact was isolated and showed good agreement by MS with the compound **17** (n = 4). The moderate oxophilicity of InCl₃ contributes to its catalytic use.¹⁸ A similar hydrosilyl ether was detected in the mixture of chlorodiphenylsilane with 2-decanol (1a) at 80 °C by ²⁹Si NMR. The ²⁹Si NMR showed a signal at -15.18 ppm (d, J = 216 Hz), while no reaction was observed at room temperature. After cooling to room temperature, the addition of a catalytic amount of InCl₃ to the mixture gave the corresponding decane (2a) in quantitative yield. These results suggest that the rate-determining step is the formation of silyl ether from the alcohol with the chlorohydrosilane. It is important that the facile transformation of silvl ether to alkane is accelerated by catalytic amount of InCl₃.

Conclusions

The direct reduction of secondary, benzyl, and tertiary alcohols proceeds by chlorodiphenylsilane with a catalytic amount of indium trichloride, in which a hydrosilyl ether is a key intermediate. $InCl_3$ acts as Lewis acid to accelerate the deoxygenation of the resulting intermediate that accompanies the hydride transfer. This system attains high chemoselectivity for only the hydroxyl group in multifunctional compounds. Indium trichloride is considered as a unique Lewis acid because of its low affinity to oxygen compared to that of aluminum or boron compounds. This character causes the catalytic activity of indium trichloride in this reducing process.

Experimental Section

General. IR spectra were recorded as thin films or as solids in KBr pellets on a HORIBA FT-720 spectrophotometer. ¹H, ¹³C, and ²⁹Si NMR spectra were obtained with a 270, 67.9, and 53.7 MHz spectrometer, respectively, with TMS as internal or external standard. Mass spectra were recorded on a JEOL JMS-DS303 or a Shimadzu GCMS-QP2000A spectrometer. GLC analyses were performed on a Shimadzu GC-8A with FID using a 2 m × 3 mm column packed with SE-52. Column chromatography was performed on silica gel (Wakogel C-300). Bulb-to-bulb distillation (Kugelrohr) was accomplished in a Sibata GTO-250RS at the oven temperature and pressure indicated. Yields were determined by GLC or ¹H NMR using internal standards.

Materials. Dichloromethane and 1,2-dichloroethane were distilled from CaH₂. THF was distilled from sodium and benzophenone. All reducing reagents and catalysts in Table 1 were commercially available. The starting alcohols, 1-phenylbutane-1,4-diol (**1**l) and **12** were prepared, and the experi-

⁽¹²⁾ Nitroaryl compounds can be reduced by a Zn/H₂O/EtOH system. *Organic Syntheses*; Wiley: New York, 1943; Collect. Vol. II, pp 447–448.

⁽¹³⁾ The signals for the methine moiety in benzhydrol are 6.03 and 75.64 ppm in 1 H and 13 C NMR, respectively.

⁽¹⁴⁾ In ¹H NMR, the corresponding signals of hydrogens on silicons were observed at 5.72 ppm with satellite peaks (J = 235 Hz) and at 5.65 ppm with satellite peaks (J = 220 Hz).

⁽¹⁵⁾ Tamao, K.; Tohma, T.; Inui, N.; Nakayama, O.; Ito, Y. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1990**, *31*, 7333–7336.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Blackwell, J. M.; Foster, K. L.; Beck, V. H.; Piers, W. E. J. Org. Chem. **1999**, *64*, 4887–4892 and references therein.

⁽¹⁷⁾ The generated HCl was found not to catalyze the reaction because the addition of MgO, which can trap HCl as a base, did not affect the yield in the reaction of **1b**. Nakano, M.; Matsuo, J.-i.; Mukaiyama, T. *Chem. Lett.* **2000**, 1352–1353.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Yasuda, M.; Onishi, Y.; Ito, T.; Baba, A. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **2000**, *41*, 2425–2428.

mental details are described in Supporting Information. These preparation methods were not optimized. The compound **3** was prepared by a known method [*Organic Syntheses*; Wiley: New York, 1955; Collect. Vol. III, p 408]. All other starting alcohols are commercially available.

General Procedure (I) for Reduction of Alcohols Using $Ph_2SiHCl/InCl_3$ System (Table 2 and Scheme 1). To a mixture of $InCl_3$ (0.05 mmol) and the alcohol (1.0 mmol) in dry dichloromethane or 1,2-dichloroethane (1 mL) was added chlorodiphenylsilane (2.0 mmol) under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred under the reaction conditions noted in the text. The resulting mixture was poured into Et_2O (50 mL) and water (30 mL). The homogeneous solution was extracted with Et_2O , and the organic layer was dried over MgSO₄. The evaporation of the ether solution gave the crude product, which was analyzed by GLC and NMR. The details of further purification performed for the new compound are described in Supporting Information.

General Procedure (II) for Reduction of Alcohols (3, 6, and 9) Using LiAlH4 (Scheme 1). To a solution of the alcohol (1.0 mmol) in dry THF (1 mL) was added LiAlH4 (2.0 mmol) under nitrogen (4 mmol of LiAlH4 was used in the reaction with 9). The reaction mixture was stirred under the conditions described in the text. The resulting mixture was quenched by ethyl acetate (10 mL) and aq HCl (1 M, 30 mL). The resultant mixture was extracted with Et₂O, and the organic layer was dried over MgSO₄. The evaporation of the ether solution gave the crude product, which was analyzed by

GLC and NMR. The details of further purification performed for the new compound are described in Supporting Information.

Reduction of Alcohol 12 Using Zn (Scheme 1). To a solution of **12** (1 mmol) in mixed solvent (EtOH, 8 mL and H_2O , 2 mL) was added a solution of 3.0 g of zinc dust and 0.1 g of calcium chloride in 0.15 mL of water. The mixture was refluxed for 3 h. After filtration of zinc compound, the filtrate was extracted with diethyl ether. The organic layer was dried over MgSO₄ and evaporated to give the crude product, which was analyzed by GLC and NMR. Further purification was performed by washing with hexane to give the pure product as a yellow solid [*Organic Syntheses*; Wiley: New York, 1943; Collect. Vol. II, pp 447–448].

Acknowledgment. This work was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture, of the Japanese Government. Thanks are due to Mr. H. Moriguchi, Faculty of Engineering, Osaka University, for assistance in obtaining MS spectra.

Supporting Information Available: Characterization data of all compounds. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

JO0158534