Copper(II)-catalyzed O-Phenylation of Tertiary Alcohols with Organobismuth(V) Reagents

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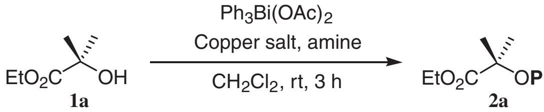
A new method for the $Cu(OAc)_2$-catalyzed phenylation of tertiary alcohols under mild basic conditions is described. Triphenylbismuth(V) diacetate and tetraphenylbismuth reagents undergo cross-coupling reactions with α-hydroxycarbonyl compouds efficiently. For non-chelating tertiary alcohols, tetraphenylbismuth fluoride is found suitable as a phenyl donor.

The copper-mediated formation of C(aryl)–O bonds (Ullmann ether synthesis[1,2]) is an important and frequently employed transformation in organic synthesis. O-Arylation of aliphatic alcohols has been performed by using aryl halides and aryl metalloid reagents such as organo-boron and -bismuth compounds as aryl donors.[2] Recently, Buchwald demonstrated that copper(I) iodide promoted the cross coupling of aryl halides with aliphatic alcohols at elevated temperatures.[3] Batey reported coupling reactions of aliphatic alcohols with aryltrifluoroborate salts in the presence of catalytic amounts of $Cu(OAc)_2$ and 4-(dimethylamino)pyridine (DMAP) at room temperature,[4] which is a modified protocol of Chan–Evans's method for the arylation of phenols using aryl boronic acids.[5] Although these Cu-catalyzed O-arylation reactions proceed effectively with primary and secondary alcohols, the synthesis of *tert*-alkyl aryl ethers from sterically-hindered tertiary alcohols is still difficult.[6] Pd-catalyzed reactions enable the cross coupling of tertiary alcohols with aryl chlorides or bromides,[7] but these etherification reactions need strongly basic alkoxides and proceed at elevated temperatures.

Triarylbismuth reagents such as $Ar_3Bi(OAc)_2$ are also known to transfer their aryl groups to aliphatic alcohols particularly in the presence of a catalytic or stoichiometric amount of copper salts.[2a–2c,8] Moreover, the reactions using these Bi reagents were applied to the selective O-arylation of hydroxyl groups of complex, biologically-active natural products.[9] However, the arylation of tertiary alcohols has not yet been examined thoroughly despite the above successful results. Dodonov reported the Cu-catalyzed reaction of $Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ in *t*-butanol used as solvent gave *t*-butyl phenyl ether in a poor yield (based on the Bi reagent).[10] As a part of our study on the organobismuth chemistry,[11] we now report the $Cu(OAc)_2$-catalyzed O-phenylation of tertiary alcohols with tri- or tetraphenylbismuth reagents in the presence of a tertiary amine. The reactions can be carried out under air without exclusion of moisture.

At first, ethyl 2-hydroxy-2-methylpropionate (**1a**) was chosen as a model on considering the chelating effect of the substrate,[12] and then the O-phenylation of **1a** using several copper salts (10 mol %), triethylamine (2.0 equiv.), and $Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ (1.1 equiv.) in dichloromethane at room temperature was examined (Table 1, Entries 1–6). The use of $Cu(OAc)_2$ was the best to promote the reaction, providing the desired product **2a** in 64% yield (Entry 6). On the other hand, the use of metallic copper, CuI, $CuCl_2$, $CuBr_2$, or $Cu(acac)_2$ was less effective. Then, the combinations of $Cu(OAc)_2$ and several tertiary amines were screened. The yield of **2a** was slightly improved when bulky aliphatic amines such as dicyclohexylmethylamine (Cy_2NMe) were employed (Entries 7 and 8) although *N*,*N*,*N*′,*N*′-tetramethylethylenediamine (TMEDA) and pyridine derivatives did not afford **2a** at all (Entries 9–12). In the absence of amine, the yield of **2a** decreased down to 46% (Entry 13).

Table 1. Effect of copper salts and tertiary amines[a]



Entry	Copper salt	Amine	Yield/%
1	Cu	Et_3N	2
2	CuI	Et_3N	45
3	$CuCl_2$	Et_3N	44
4	$CuBr_2$	Et_3N	45
5	$Cu(acac)_2$	Et_3N	1
6	$Cu(OAc)_2$	Et_3N	64
7	$Cu(OAc)_2$	*i*-Pr_2NEt	66
8	**$Cu(OAc)_2$**	**Cy_2NMe**	**68**
9	$Cu(OAc)_2$	TMEDA	0
10	$Cu(OAc)_2$	Pyridine	0
11	$Cu(OAc)_2$	DMAP	0
12	$Cu(OAc)_2$	1,10-Phenanthroline	0
13	$Cu(OAc)_2$	None	46

[a] The reactions were carried out by using **1a** (1.0 equiv.), $Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ (1.1 equiv.), Cu salt (10 mol %), and amine (2.0 equiv.).

Table 2. Effect of organobismuth reagents[a]

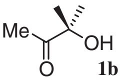
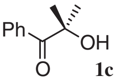
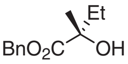
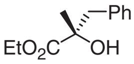
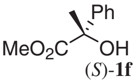
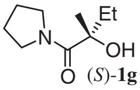
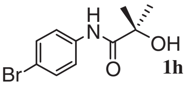
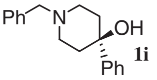
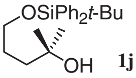
Entry	Bi reagent (equiv.)	Yield/%
1	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ (1.1)	69
2	**$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ (1.6)**	**89**
3[b]	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ (1.6)	79
4	**$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$ (1.6)**	**95**
5	**Ph_4BiF (1.6)**	**93**
6	Ph_3Bi (1.6)	0
7	Ph_3BiCl_2 (1.6)	0
8	Ph_3BiCO_3 (1.6)	0

[a] The reactions were carried out by using **1a** (1.0 equiv.), Bi reagent, $Cu(OAc)_2$ (5 mol %), and Cy_2NMe (2.0 equiv.) in CH_2Cl_2 at rt for 3 h. [b] 1 mol % of $Cu(OAc)_2$ was used.

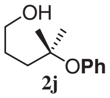
Next, the O-phenylation of **1a** was studied further by using various tri-, or tetraphenylbismuth(V) reagents in the coexis-

Table 3. Phenylation of various tertiary alochols[a]

$$\underset{\mathbf{1}}{\mathrm{ROH}} \xrightarrow[\mathrm{CH_2Cl_2,\ rt,\ 3\ h}]{\text{Bi reagent} \atop \mathrm{Cu(OAc)_2,\ Cy_2NMe}} \underset{\mathbf{2}}{\mathrm{ROPh}}$$

Entry	Alcohol	Bi reagent	Yield/ %	Product
1	 **1b**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	46	**2b**
2		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	85	
3		Ph_4BiF	87	
4	 **1c**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	92	**2c**
5		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	90	
6		Ph_4BiF	82	
7	 (*S*)-**1d**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	88	(*S*)-**2d**
8		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	85	
9		Ph_4BiF	85	
10	 (*S*)-**1e**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	82	(*S*)-**2e**
11		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	89	
12		Ph_4BiF	84	
13	 (*S*)-**1f**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	86	(*S*)-**2f**
14		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	71	
15		Ph_4BiF	86	
16	 (*S*)-**1g**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	80	(*S*)-**2g**
17		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	94	
18		Ph_4BiF	85	
19	 **1h**	Ph3Bi(OAc)2	64	**2h**
20		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	73	
21		Ph_4BiF	89	
22	 **1i**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	< 22	**2i**
23		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	ND[b]	
24		Ph_4BiF	88	
25[c]	 **1j**	$Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$	3	**2j**
26[c]		$[Ph_4Bi^+][BF_4^-]$	ND[b]	
27[c]		Ph_4BiF	50	

[a] The reactions were carried out by using alcohol (1.0 equiv.), Bi reagent (1.6 equiv.), $Cu(OAc)_2$ (5 mol %), and Cy_2NMe (2.0 equiv.). [b] Not detected. [c] **2j** was obtained after treating the crude product with Bu_4NF.



2j

tence of $Cu(OAc)_2$ (5 mol %) and Cy_2NMe (2.0 equiv.) (Table 2). In the case where 1.6 equiv. of $Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ was used under the above conditions, the product **2a** was obtained in 89% yield (Entry 2). Interestingly, tetraphenylbismuth reagents ($Ph_4Bi^+BF_4^-$, Ph_4BiF)[13] were found effective as phenyl donors, which also produced **2a** in high yields (Entries 4 and 5).

With optimal conditions in hand, the scope and limitations of this method were examined (Table 3). As expected, α-hydroxy-ketone, -carboxylic esters and -carboxamides were efficiently phenylated by the use of $Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$, $Ph_4Bi^+BF_4^-$, and Ph_4BiF at room temperature, and the desired O-phenylated products **2b**–**2h** were obtained in high yields (Entries 1–21). On the other hand, the O-phenylation of the tertiary alcohols **1i** and **1j** was more sluggish probably because they are non-chelating substrates. The desired products **2i** and **2j** were obtained in poor yields when $Ph_3Bi(OAc)_2$ was used because a substantial amount of phenyl acetate was formed by the decomposition of the Bi reagent[12a] (Entries 22 and 25). Also, the use of $Ph_4Bi^+BF_4^-$ did not give the desired products at all (Entires 23 and 26). The results were much better in the reaction with Ph_4BiF, and the O-phenylated products **2i** and **2j**[14,15] were obtained in 88 and 50% yields, respectively (Entries 24 and 27).[16]

Thus, a new protocol for the synthesis of tertiary alkyl–phenyl ethers via the Cu(II)-catalyzed coupling of polyphenylbismuth(V) reagents with tertiary alcohols at room temperature was developed. Both chelating and non-chelating substrates participated in the reactions by using Ph_4BiF as a phenyl donor, and various functionalities including ketone, carboxylic ester, amide, tertiary amine, *t*-butyldiphenylsilyloxy group, and aryl bromide were well-tolerated. It is noted that the present reaction apparently extends the scope of the Ullmann-arylation chemistry. Further investigation on the phenylation of primary and secondary alcohols by this method is currently under way in our laboratory.

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16 For experimental procedures and characterization data for the phenylated products **2**, see Supporting Information.

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