The sequential acid-base-acid cleavage of vield. oxazolines currently appears to be the choice method for preparing the acids, 6, since direct acid hydrolysis of 5 results in 5–10% racemization of the ester $8.^7$

The order in which the alkyl groups are introduced into the chiral oxazoline was found to be critical to the success of the asymmetric synthesis. For example, when 3 was treated with base to form the lithio salt, 4 or 4a, and then alkylated with benzyl chloride, the oxazoline 10 was smoothly formed which gave, after direct acidic cleavage, 2-methyl-3-phenylpropionic acid (12) in 60-70% optical purity.8 However, when the 2phenethyloxazoline (11) (via alkylation of the 2-methyloxazoline with benzyl chloride; BuLi, -78° , THF) was treated with base and methyl iodide (-78° , THF), the oxazoline 10 was formed which gave essentially racemic 2-methyl-3-phenylpropionic acid (12). These results



imply that the nature of the 2-alkyl groups originally present in the oxazoline (3 or 11) has a considerable effect upon the reactivity of the lithio anions.⁹ Other data in hand also confirm the fact that 2-substituents on the oxazoline *larger than ethyl* also lead to nearly racemic products. The structures drawn for the lithiooxazolines (4 and 4a) should, therefore, not be considered firm at this time, although they do represent a reasonable working hypothesis.¹⁰ Further studies are

(7) Evidence for racemization in the ester intermediate 8 was gathered by hydrolysis under different time intervals. The longer the ester was heated in 4.5 N HCl, the lower the optical purity of the acid, although the acids themselves were found to be completely stable to racemization under these conditions.

(8) M. B. Watson and G. W. Youngson, J. Chem. Soc. C, 258 (1968), report $+20.4^{\circ}$ (neat) for this acid.

(9) The nearly racemic acid obtained from 11 could also be due to the small electrophile being introduced (i.e., methyl) which may enter the molecule from one of several approaches. However, alkylation of 4 with the slightly larger ethyl iodide gave 2-methylbutanoic acid (6) $(\mathbf{R} = \mathbf{E}t)$ in high optical yield (Table I).

(10) The corresponding trans-4-methyl-5-phenyloxazoline [[α]D + 81°] obtained by resolution of norephedrine was evaluated as a source of chiral carboxylic acids and found to give only 10-12% optically pure material. The absence of the methoxyl function in this oxazoline coupled with the poorer optical yields lends some credence to the structures depicted for the lithio salts 4 and 4a.

in progress to evaluate the effect of a wide variety of substituents and scope of this method.

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Supplementary Material Available. Complete experimental details on all compounds described in this communication will appear following these pages in the microfilm edition of this volume of the journal. Photocopies of the supplementary material from this paper only or microfiche (105 × 148 mm, 24× reduction, negatives) containing all of the supplementary material for the papers in this issue may be obtained from the Journals Department, American Chemical Society, 1155 16th St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036. Remit check or money order for \$3.00 for photocopy or \$2.00 for microfiche, referring to code number JACS-74-268.

> A. I. Meyers,* Gerald Knaus, K. Kamata Department of Chemistry, Colorado State University Fort Collins, Colorado 80521 Received September 12, 1973

Electron-Transfer Catalyzed Cis-Trans Isomerization of Stilbene. The Stability of Sodium cis-Stilbenide and the Existence of Sodium Salts of cis- and of trans-Stilbene Dianions

Sir:

Electron transfer from a radical anion, $A \cdot \overline{}$, to an aromatic acceptor, B, viz.

$$A \cdot^{-} + B \longrightarrow A + B \cdot^{-} \tag{1}$$

is extremely fast when the electron affinity of B, EA(B), is greater than that of A. Nevertheless, techniques for studying its kinetics are available.¹⁻³ The reverse reaction is inaccessible to a direct kinetic investigation when $EA(B) \ll EA(A)$, because the equilibrium concentration of $\mathbf{B} \cdot \mathbf{\bar{B}}$ is then exceedingly low. However, if some reaction different than the reverse of 1 rapidly removes $\mathbf{B} \cdot \mathbf{-}$, reaction 1 might become rate determining and its progress could be measured then, e.g., by the disappearance of B.

Having this strategem in mind, we decided to investigate the kinetics of electron transfer from sodium anthracenide, A.-, Na+, to cis-stilbene, C, leading to the isomerization of the latter. This reaction was followed spectrophotometrically by monitoring the absorbance at 285 nm. At this wavelength the decimal extinction coefficients of cis- and trans-stilbenes are 1.02 \times 10⁴ and 2.45 \times 10⁴ M^{-1} cm $^{-1}$, respectively, and the absorbance of the anthracenide is at minimum, $\epsilon 0.35 \times 10^4 M^{-1} \mathrm{cm}^{-1}$. The starting cis isomer was purified by vpc and contained about 6% of the trans isomer (determined spectrophotometrically at λ 320 nm).

It is known⁴ that cis-stilbene isomerizes into transstilbene, T, when in contact with radical anions, and

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10³[A· [−] ,Na ⁺], M	10 ⁸ [A], <i>M</i>	[A· ⁻ ,Na ⁺]/[A]	$10^{3}k_{ap}$, sec ⁻¹	$k_{ap}/\{[A,-,Na^+]/[A]\}^2 = k_{isom}K_2K_5 (sec^{-1})$
9.7	3.1	3.16	53.5	5.35×10^{-3}
3.12	0.965	3.25	53.0	$5.0 imes 10^{-3}$
2.12	1.06	2.00	25.8	6.4×10^{-3}
6.6	3.2	2.06	22.6	5.30×10^{-3}
4.85	3.5	1.38	10.9	5.72×10^{-3}
2.87	3.17	0.82	4.35	5.30×10^{-3}
0.332	3.19	0.107	0.074	6.43×10^{-3}
2.03	2.4	0.84	4.7	6.6×10^{-3}

therefore the following sequence of events could be expected

$$A \cdot \overline{,} Na^+ + C \longrightarrow A + C \cdot \overline{,} Na^+$$
 (2)

$$C \cdot \overline{,Na^+} \longrightarrow T \cdot \overline{,Na^+}$$
 (3)

$$\Gamma \cdot \overline{,} Na^{+} + A \longrightarrow T + A \cdot \overline{,} Na^{+}$$
(4)

The relative electron affinities of cis- and of transstilbene have been determined polarographically⁵ and both are substantially lower than that of anthracene. Therefore the stationary concentrations of $C \cdot -, Na^+$ or $T \cdot \overline{,Na^+}$ should be negligible in the reacting solution, even if C is in excess (see Table I for the pertinent data). Indeed, we found the isomerization to be catalyzed by sodium anthracenide; no reaction was observed in its absence. (No change was observed in a solution of cis-stilbene kept in the sample compartment of a Cary-14 spectrophotometer with the analyzing beam on for 10 hr. We know an example of photolysis resulting from the irradiation of a sample by the analyzing beam of a Cary-14 spectrophotometer.⁶) The addition of cis-stilbene did not affect the concentration of $A \cdot -, Na^+$ which remained constant during the reaction. The isomerization was virtually completed within 10-30 min and in each run ln [C] was strictly linear with time, even at 95% of conversion. However, the pseudofirst-order rate constant, $k_{ap} = d \ln [C]/dt$, instead of being proportional to $[A \cdot -, Na^+]$ and independent of [A], was found to be proportional to $\{[A \cdot \overline{,Na^+}]/$ $[A]^2$ provided $[A] > 2 \times 10^{-3} M$. This relation is verified by the data collected in Table I which lists also the ratios $k_{ap}/\{[A \cdot -, Na^+]/[A]\}^2$.

Apparently the sodium salt of *cis*-stilbenide, $C \cdot -$, Na⁺, is stable and does not isomerize in the course of our experiments. However, $C \cdot -$, Na⁺ may be reduced further (or disproportionate) to C^{2-} , 2Na⁺

$$C \cdot \overline{,Na^+ + A \cdot \overline{,Na^+}} \xrightarrow{k_5} C^{2-}, 2Na^+ + A$$
 (5)

and the salt of the dianion, C^{2-} , $2Na^+$, isomerizes then in a rate-determining step

$$C^{2-},2Na^+ \xrightarrow{k_{isom}} T^{2-},2Na^+$$
 (6)

The stationary-state treatment (reaction 2 is assumed to maintain the *equilibrium* concentration of $C \cdot -, Na^+$) gives

$$k_{\rm ap} = k_{\rm isom} K_2 K_5 \{ [\mathbf{A} \cdot -] / [\mathbf{A}] \}^2 / (1 + k_{\rm isom} / k_{-5} [\mathbf{A}] \}$$

For sufficiently high concentration of A, $k_{-5}[A] \gg k_{isom}$ and then the approximation $k_{ap} = k_{isom}K_2K_5$.



Figure 1. Plot of $\{[A \cdot -]/[A]\}^2/k_{ap}$ vs. $10^{-3}/[A]$: slope = $1/k_{15}K_2K_5$; intercept = $1/k_{15}mK_2K_5$; slope/intercept = $k_{15}m/k_{-5} = 2 \times 10^{-3} M$.

 $\{[A \cdot -, Na^+]/[A]\}^2$ is valid. Apparently this approximation applies when $[A] > 2 \times 10^{-3} M$ since the values of $k_{isom}K_2K_5$ given in Table I are constant.

On the whole, k_{ap} obeys the relation $\{[A \cdot -]/[A]\}^2/k_{ap} = (k_{isom}K_2K_5)^{-1} + (k_{-5}K_2K_5)^{-1}/[A]$, verified by Figure 1. This confirms the proposed mechanism. Had the formation of C²-,2Na⁺ been due to disproportionation

$$2\mathbf{C}\cdot \mathbf{k}_{\mathrm{d}} + \frac{k_{\mathrm{d}}}{k_{\mathrm{d}}} \mathbf{C}^{2}, 2\mathbf{N}\mathbf{a}^{+} + \mathbf{C}, K_{\mathrm{d}} = k_{\mathrm{d}}/k_{\mathrm{d}}$$

the kinetics would be given by

$$-d \ln [C]/dt = k_{isom} K_2^2 K_d \{ [A \cdot -]/[A]^2 \} / (1 + k_{isom}/k_{-d}[C]) \}$$

where $K_2^2K_d = K_2K_5$. The reaction would acquire then a second-order character in its last stages, contrary to our observation. If the electron transfer and the disproportionation contribute to the formation of C^{2-} , 2Na⁺, their relative contributions are given by $(k_5/k_d)([C]/[A])$ and our kinetic scheme could be affected had this ratio been small. Apparently this is not the case under our experimental conditions.

Further evidence for the proposed mechanism is provided by the experiments involving sodium pyrenide, $\pi \cdot \overline{}$, Na⁺, instead of anthracenide. The isomerization was much faster, but otherwise retained all its previous

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characteristics. It is easy to verify that the resulting $k_{ap}/\{[\pi \cdot , Na^+]/[\pi]\}^2 = k_{isom}K_2'K_5'$ is related to the previously determined $k_{isom}K_2K_5$ by the relation

$$k_{\rm isom} K_2' K_5' / k_{\rm isom} K_2 K_5 = (K_{\rm A,\pi})^2$$

where $K_{A,\pi}$ is the equilibrium constant of the reaction

$$r \cdot \overline{,Na^+ + A} \cong A \cdot \overline{,Na^+ + \pi, K_{A,\pi}}$$

Thus calculated $K_{A,\pi}$ was found to be 140; whereas the direct determination7 led to the value of 110.

In conclusion, neither cis-stilbene nor its radical anion salt isomerize spontaneously within the time period of our experiments, while its dianion salt does. We derive from Figure 1 $k_{isom}/k_{-5} = 2 \times 10^{-3} M$ and therefore $k_{isom} \leq 5 \times 10^6 \text{ sec}^{-1}$ because k_{-5} is probably diffusion controlled, *i.e.*, $k_{-5} \approx 10^{10} M^{-1} \text{ sec}^{-1}$. Hence, the lifetime of the sodium salt is 2×10^{-7} sec⁻¹ or more. The principle of microscopic reversibility demands therefore the existence of four thermodynamically distinct species: cis-stibene ·-, Na+, trans-stilbene ·-, Na+, cisstilbene²⁻,2Na⁺, and *trans*-stilbene⁻²,2Na⁺. The relative stability of cis-stilbene²⁻,2Na⁺, surprising in view of its endowment with two antibonding electrons, is tentatively attributed to the binding of both phenyl groups by the sodium counterions.

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G. Levin, T. A. Ward, M. Szwarc*

Department of Chemistry, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry Syracuse, New York 13210 Received September 27, 1973

Stereochemistry of 1,4-Cyclohexadienes. Confirmation via Rare Earth Shift Reagents

Sir:

A considerable amount of controversy exists concerning the conformational preferences of 1,4-cyclohexadiene (1) and its derivatives. A planar structure, 1a, has been proposed by several investigators¹⁻⁷ using various techniques including nmr5 and electron diffraction.⁶ However, a subsequent conflicting electron



diffraction study of 18 and nmr studies of several deriva-

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tives⁹⁻¹¹ have resulted in the suggestion of a boat conformation. 1b.

Thus far, the nmr studies on derivatives of 1 have considered only the ratio of the homoallylic cis and trans (H_1 to H_4) coupling constants. It was on this basis that boat conformations were postulated, and Marshall, et al.,¹¹ suggested that 1,4-dihydrobenzoic acid exists in a boat with the substituent pseudoequatorial. Unfortunately, there has been some disagreement^{6, 10, 11} concerning the "predicted value" of the $J_{\rm cis}/J_{\rm trans}$ ratio expected for the planar form.¹²

A major difficulty in the nmr analysis of 1-substituted-1,4-cyclohexadienes is the fact that the several derivatives reported all show a deceptively simple spectrum. Typically, the methine proton appears as a triplet (H₁, $J \sim 8-9$ Hz) coupled to the methylene protons $(H_4, H_{4'})$ which appear as a corresponding doublet. Hence, H_4 and $H_{4'}$ appear to have the same chemical shift and also *appear* to be equally coupled to H_1 . In addition, the vinyl protons often have approximately the same chemical shift, and neither the vicinal nor allylic coupling constants have been determined. In fact, even the homoallylic coupling constants are difficult to obtain and have only been measured by preparing deuterated compounds. 12, 14, 15

In an attempt to prepare a cyclohexadiene that might be more suitable for nmr analysis, Marshall and Folsom¹⁴ prepared 1,4-dihydro-1-naphthoic acid (2) and



concluded, from the vicinal coupling constants (H_1H_2 = 4.59 Hz, $H_3H_4 = 4.60$, $H_3H_{4'} = 2.44$) together with the Karplus equation, that the ring was boat shaped with the CO₂H pseudoaxial. Later, however, the homoallylic coupling constants were accurately determined using deuterium substitution ($J_{1,4} = 3.84, J_{1,4'} = 4.36$), and, since the homoallylic cis/trans ratio was very close to the predicted value for a flat ring (see ref 12), a "flattened boat" was proposed.15

We would now like to report the first complete nmr analysis of a 1-substituted-1,4-cyclohexadiene, which we were able to accomplish with the use of the rare earth shift reagent Eu(fod)3.16 Birch reduction of benzoic acid followed by LiAlH₄ reduction resulted in 1,4-dihydrobenzyl alcohol (3).¹⁷ The complete nmr analysis of 3 was accomplished by adding Eu(fod)₃, and under these conditions the H_4 and $H_{4'}$ protons appeared as an AB quartet (H₄ assigned to the signal

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