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ACS Catal., Just Accepted Manuscript • DOI: 10.1021/acscatal.6b02621 • Publication Date (Web): 06 Oct 2016

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Polystyrene-Supported TRIP: A Highly Recyclable Catalyst for Batch and Flow Enantioselective Allylation of Aldehydes

Lidia Clot-Almenara,[‡] Carles Rodríguez-Esrich,^{*‡} Laura Osorio-Planes[‡] and Miquel A. Pericàs^{*‡§}

[‡]Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ), The Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Av. Països Catalans, 16, 43007 Tarragona (Spain)

[§]Departament de Química Orgànica, Universitat de Barcelona (UB), 08028 Barcelona (Spain)

ABSTRACT: The widely applicable TRIP phosphoric acid catalyst has been immobilized on polystyrene using a copolymerization-based strategy. The resin (**PS-TRIP**) has proven highly active and enantioselective in the asymmetric allylboration of aldehydes. Moreover, it has shown to be extremely robust, as it can be reused for 18 times, after which it still retained its activity. Finally, to further prove the benefits of the immobilization, a continuous flow experiment spanning 28 h has been carried out with very high yields and ee's.

KEYWORDS: enantioselective catalysis • chiral phosphoric acids • polystyrene-supported catalysts • flow chemistry • organocatalysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the pioneering works of Akiyama¹ and Terada,² chiral phosphoric acids have proven extremely successful and versatile enantioselective catalysts.³ Indeed, these Brønsted acids (which can be regarded as a metal-free alternative to chiral Lewis acids) have been used in a wide variety of asymmetric catalytic transformations including transfer hydrogenation,⁴ addition to imines,⁵ multi-component reactions⁶ or (trans)acetalization,⁷ to name just a few. With BINOL-derived phosphoric acids, the substituents in the 3,3' positions have been found to exert a dramatic effect on both the catalytic activity and enantioselectivity.⁸ Among all the reported structures, the 2,4,6-tris-isopropyl derivative commonly known as TRIP (introduced by List *et al.* in 2005^{4a}) has been the most successful, judging by the recent literature. This catalyst has been applied to a vast range of enantioselective reactions with unprecedented levels of stereocontrol,⁹ either as a Brønsted acid catalyst or in ACDC catalysis.¹⁰ However, TRIP presents some important drawbacks, mainly associated to its tedious preparation (reflected in a high cost), the adventitious formation of the related sodium or calcium salts¹¹ and the usually high catalyst loadings required.

Thus, even if it might entail a somewhat longer sequence, we thought it could be interesting to study the immobilization¹² of TRIP onto a solid support as it would allow to (a) recover and reuse the catalyst, thus reducing its effective cost and (b) preclude the formation of calcium or sodium salts by skipping any chromatographic purification. Based on the few previous works involving solid-supported phosphoric acids,^{13,14} (including our own experience¹⁵) we expected that a polystyrene-supported TRIP (**PS-TRIP**) would fulfill these conditions while retaining the excellent enantiocontrol and wide applicability of its homogeneous counterpart (Figure 1). However, what is to the best of our knowledge the only reported attempt to immobilize TRIP had given rise to a

non-active catalyst,¹⁶ so the immobilization strategy was deemed crucial.

We report herein the development of a simple and effective strategy for the incorporation of TRIP in a slightly cross-linked polystyrene network without compromising the excellent catalytic activity and enantioselectivity displayed by the monomer. The resulting functional polymer (**PS-TRIP**) has been used as an unlimitedly recyclable catalyst for the highly enantioselective allylboration of aldehydes in batch and flow.

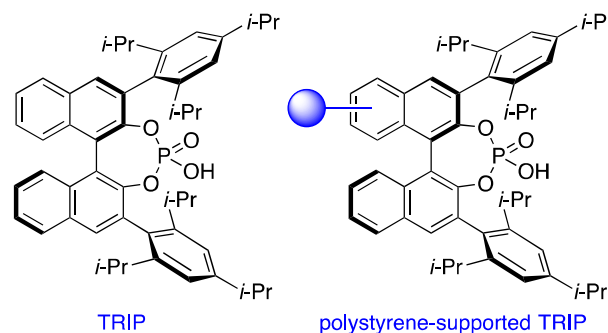
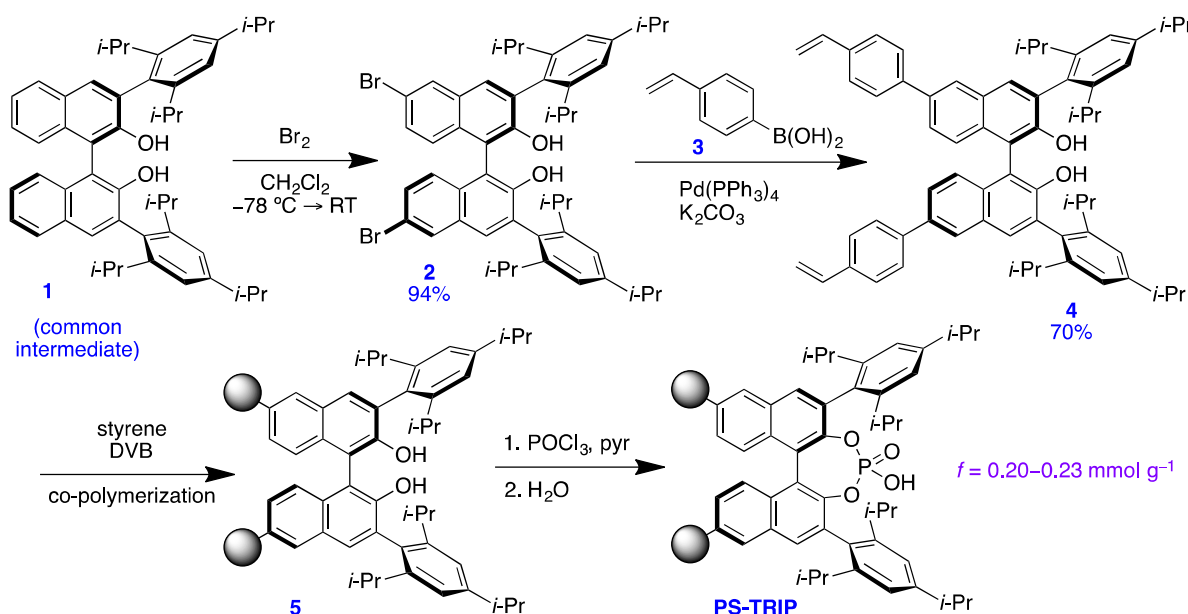


Figure 1. TRIP catalyst and an immobilized version thereof.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The preparation of **PS-TRIP** (Scheme 1) is common to that of its homogeneous analogue¹¹ until diol **1**. At that point, instead of the direct phosphorylation reported by List and co-workers, we carried out a dibromination in 6,6', followed by Suzuki coupling with 4-vinylphenylboronic acid (**3**). Divinylated compound **4**, with a conveniently modified BINOL scaffold, was then co-polymerized with styrene and divinylbenzene to generate resin **5**,¹⁷ which was in turn phosphorylated to generate **PS-TRIP**.

Scheme 1. Preparation of PS-TRIP.



The synthesis proved to be very reproducible, leading in all cases to functionalization levels (determined by elemental analysis of P) of 0.20–0.23 mmol g⁻¹. Remarkably, the whole sequence involves only three more steps than the route for the homogeneous TRIP and both the bromination and the Suzuki coupling are very high yielding.

After optimizing the synthesis, we set our sights in finding a benchmark reaction to put the new catalytic resin **PS-TRIP** to the test. We envisaged that the asymmetric allylboration of aldehydes reported by Antilla *et al.*¹⁸ might be an interesting choice, given the versatility of chiral homoallylic alcohols as building blocks in synthesis and the simplicity of the reaction protocol. To our delight, working with 10 mol% **PS-TRIP** in toluene at 0 °C, the reaction between benzaldehyde and allylboronic pinacol ester gave **8a** in excellent yield and enantioselectivity (Table 1, entry 1). Lowering the catalyst loading to 5 mol% allowed to reach similar results (entry 2), whereas changing the solvent resulted in lower ee's (entries 3–5). Cooling down to –30 °C did not affect much the result with benzaldehyde (entry 6), but more electrophilic aldehydes gave better ee's. We attribute this to a non-catalyzed background reaction, so in order to minimize this unwanted process we decided to carry out the rest of the scope at –30 °C. Finally, increasing the concentration to 0.1 M the reaction turned out to be much faster while maintaining yield and ee (entry 7).

Table 1. Screening of reaction conditions.^a

Entry	Solvent	T (°C)	t (h)	Yield (%)	ee (%)
1 ^b	toluene	0	16	89	96
2	toluene	0	16	92	94

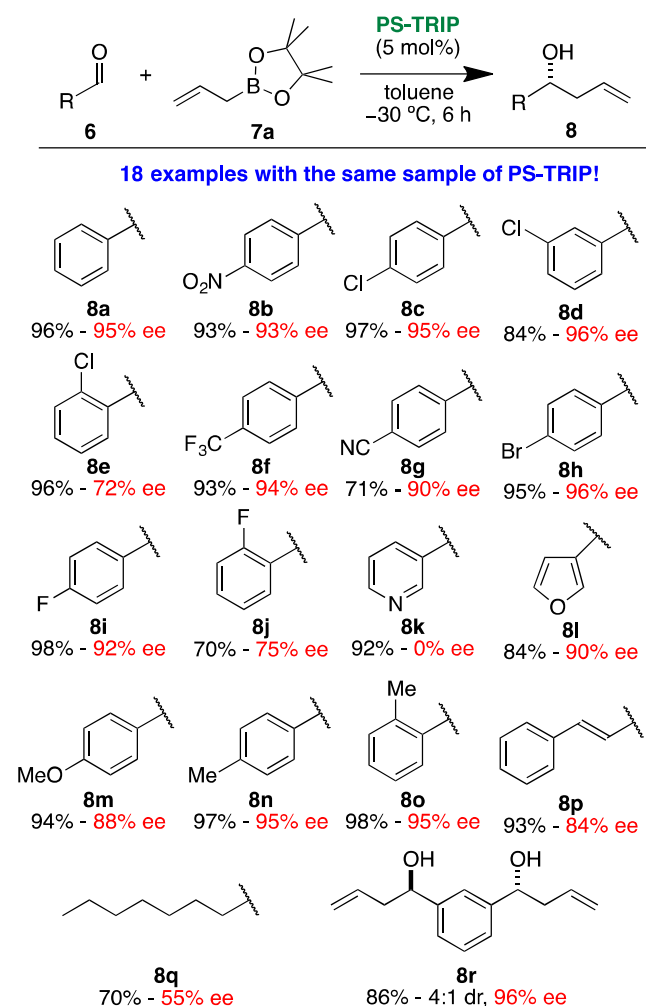
3	THF	0	48	traces	n.d.
4	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0	16	90	88
5	EtOAc	0	48	67	52
6	toluene	–30	16	97	95
7 ^c	toluene	–30	6	96	95

^a Reactions carried out at 0.06 M conc. with 5 mol% **PS-TRIP** and 1.2 equiv. of **7a**. ^b With 10 mol% **PS-TRIP**. ^c Conc: 0.1 M.

Once the reaction parameters had been fine-tuned (5 mol% **PS-TRIP**, 0.1 M in toluene, –30 °C, 6 h), we decided to study the scope of the reaction. Thus, a wide range of aldehydes was submitted to these conditions (18 examples), the results being summarized in Scheme 2. **PS-TRIP** proved excellent in the catalytic preparation of highly enantioenriched homoallylic alcohols. Electron-poor and electron-rich aromatic aldehydes (products **8a–o**) are generally well tolerated, giving rise to outstanding yields and enantioselectivities (up to 96% ee). *ortho*-Halogenated derivatives seem to be the exception, giving rise to only moderate ee's (products **8e,j**). In contrast, a toluidine with the same substitution pattern (product **8o**) reached up to 95% ee, indicating that the results with *o*-halobenzaldehydes likely arise from a combination of steric and electronic factors. Heteroaromatic substituents like 3-furyl (product **8i**) gave very good results, whereas use of a 3-pyridine resulted in a completely racemic product (**8k**); this is probably due to the basicity of this heteroaromatic moiety, which might interact with the phosphoric acid in **1**. Other interesting substrates include an α,β -unsaturated aldehyde (product **8p**), a linear one (product **8q**) and isophthalaldehyde, which gave rise to the C₂-symmetric product **8r** through double allylation.

However, perhaps the most remarkable feature of the catalyst is that all the scope shown in Scheme 2 (18 examples) has been run with the same sample of **PS-TRIP**, which has been reused extensively showing no decay in activity.

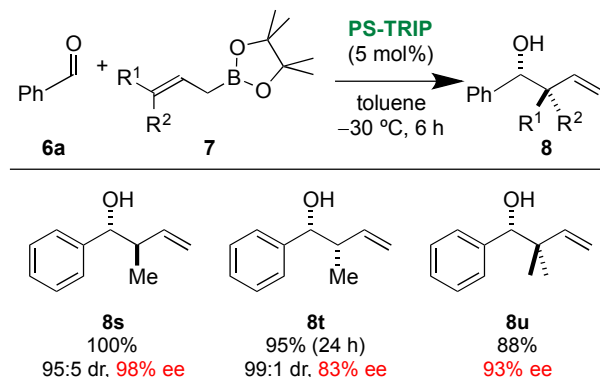
Scheme 2. Aldehyde scope. All reactions carried out with the same sample of PS-TRIP (recycled after each run).



Indeed, at the end of the scope benzaldehyde was allylated again, completely replicating the results obtained at the beginning. This shows the outstanding robustness of PS-TRIP, that can be quantified in an accumulated TON of 321. Even more interesting, during this process, the catalyst did lose activity a couple of times (e.g. after running the test with 3-

pyridinecarboxaldehyde), but simply washing the resin with a solution of HCl in EtOAc led to a complete recovery of the catalytic activity. The allylating partner scope was also briefly studied, giving excellent results in the *trans*-crotylation and dimethylallylation of benzaldehyde (products **8s** and **8u**, Scheme 3). The *cis*-crotylboronic derivative gave a slower reaction, thus providing somewhat decreased enantioselectivity, perhaps due to a competitive background reaction. However, **8t** was still isolated in 83% ee.

Scheme 3. Scope of the allylating partner.



Encouraged by the excellent results displayed by **1**, we decided to study the related flow process.¹⁹ A preliminary batch test showed that **8a** gave similar results at RT and at -30 °C, so we decided to carry out this flow experiment at 25 °C for the sake of simplicity. To this end, the three-pump system outlined in Figure 2 was assembled. As depicted, a packed bed reactor containing PS-TRIP was fed with two solutions containing the aldehyde and the allylboronic ester. Downstream of the column, an aqueous solution of NaHSO₃ was used to scavenge any unreacted aldehyde. Preliminary attempts to run the flow experiment without this last step resulted in good enantioselectivities in aliquots taken from the outstream, but somewhat diminished ee's on the collected product. We attribute this observation to a background reaction taking place in the collecting flask between the excess allylboronic ester and the small amounts of aldehyde remaining in the outstream.

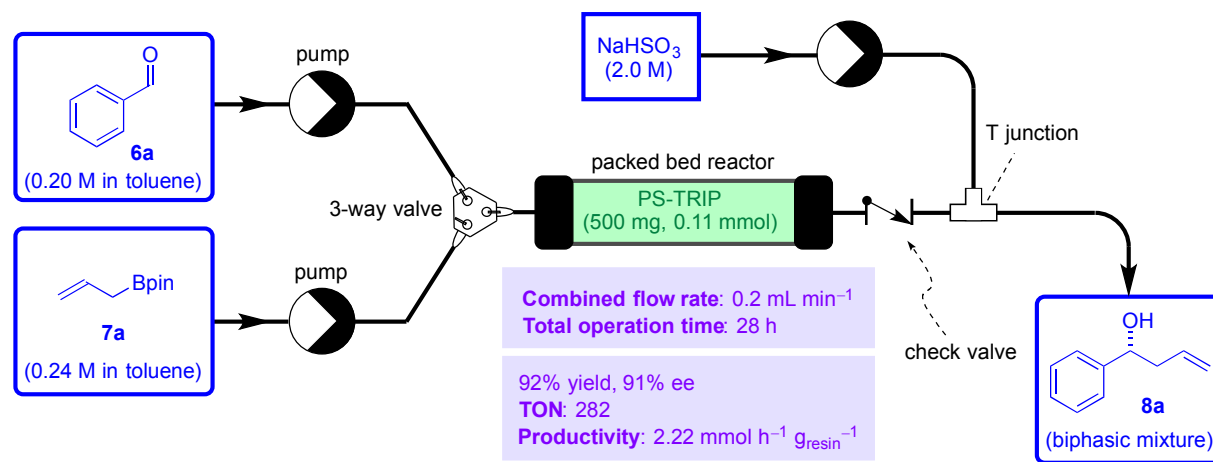


Figure 2. Experimental set-up for the continuous flow catalytic enantioselective allylation.

Under these conditions, the flow experiment was kept running for 28 h, after which 4.60 g of **8a** were isolated (92% yield, 91% ee). These numbers amount to a total TON of 282 and a productivity of 2.22 mmol h⁻¹ g_{resin}⁻¹. Remarkably, no detectable decrease in the catalytic activity of the resin took place in the 28 h experiment. This fact, together with the easy re-activation of **PS-TRIP** allows visualizing the small cartridge containing only 0.5 g of catalyst as a micropilot plant, suitable for the production of decimol amounts of enantiopure homoallylic alcohol in short periods of time (ca. 90 h) with highly reduced energy costs (no cooling required) and material costs (in a flow process with a non-deactivating catalyst, the TON increases linearly with time). Even more interestingly, catalyst cartridges involving 5 to 50 g of **PS-TRIP** (amounts within reach of the procedure reported herein) could be used for kilogram production under very favourable cost and safety conditions.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, we have prepared a polystyrene-supported TRIP catalyst that has proven very active and enantioselective in the allylation of aldehydes. The synthetic route, which involves the co-polymerization of a vinylated analog of the TRIP diol, requires only three more steps than that of the homogeneous counterpart and is amenable to multigram production. The slightly longer synthesis is exceedingly compensated by the high recyclability of **PS-TRIP**, which has given accumulated TONs in batch as high as 321 (the catalyst was still active after 18 runs). The catalytic resin has also been put to the test by means of a flow experiment spanning 28 h, in which 4.60 g of allylated product were obtained (TON of 282, productivity of 2.22 mmol h⁻¹ g_{resin}⁻¹) without decrease in activity. Thus, we believe that the recyclability and robustness of **PS-TRIP** make it an interesting alternative to the already successful homogeneous version.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website.

Synthetic procedures, characterization data, copies of NMR spectra and HPLC chromatograms (PDF)

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Authors

* E-mail: crodriguez@iciq.es

* E-mail: mapericas@iciq.es

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was funded by the Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ) Foundation, MINECO (Grant CTQ2015-69136-R and FPI pre-doctoral grant to L. C.-A) and DEC Generalitat de Catalunya (Grant 2014SGR827). We also thank MINECO for a Severo Ochoa Excellence Accreditation 2014–2018 (SEV-2013-0319).

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