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Asymmetric Catalysis Using Aromatic Aldehydes as Chiral α -Alkoxyalkyl Anions

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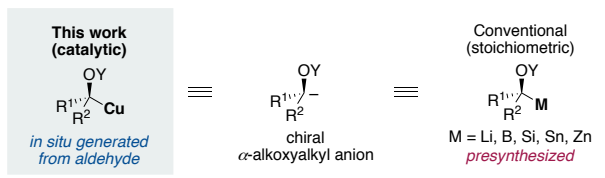
ABSTRACT: We developed a new umpolung strategy for catalytically forming a chiral α -alkoxyalkyl anion from an aromatic aldehyde for use in asymmetric synthesis. The reaction between aromatic aldehydes and aryl or allyl electrophiles with a silylboronate utilizing a chiral copper–*N*-heterocyclic carbene catalyst and a palladium–bisphosphine catalyst in a synergistic manner occurred with high enantioselectivities to deliver the three-component coupling products, chiral silyl-protected secondary alcohol derivatives. Our method features the catalytic generation of enantioenriched chiral α -alkoxyalkylcopper(I) intermediates from aldehydes and their subsequent palladium-catalyzed stereospecific cross-coupling.

Chiral α -heteroatom-substituted carbanions are attractive $C(sp^3)$ nucleophiles for the organic synthesis of chiral molecules. Specifically, α -alkoxyalkyl anions are highly valuable in constructing chiral alcohols found in a majority of pharmaceutical drugs and bioactive natural products.¹ Conventionally, chiral α -alkoxyalkyl anions are presynthesized as stoichiometric organometallic reagents (Figure 1a, right).^{2–5} Hoppe and co-workers prepared chiral α -alkoxyalkyllithium compounds by enantiotopic α -deprotonation of aliphatic alcohol derivatives with highly basic alkylolithium reagents and a stoichiometric amount of chiral amines (Figure 1b).² The obtained α -alkoxyalkyllithiums could be converted into other organometallic reagents, such as organozinc, organostannane and organoboron compounds. Alternatively, the asymmetric reduction of acylmetal compounds such as acylsilanes or acylstannanes, which are presynthesized in multistep operations, allows the preparation of chiral α -hydroxycarbanion equivalents (Figure 1c).³ More recently, copper-catalyzed enantioselective nucleophilic silylation and borylation of carbonyl compounds have been introduced as new approaches for the preparation of α -alkoxyalkylmetal compounds, but their application to organic synthesis has been underdeveloped (Figure 1d).⁴

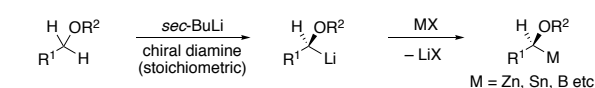
Earlier, we showed that a nucleophilic α -alkoxyalkylcopper(I) species was formed catalytically from aldehydes through the addition of a silylcopper(I) species followed by 1,2-Brook rearrangement in the palladium-catalyzed cross-coupling with aryl bromides.^{6,7} This prompted us to investigate whether the process could be adapted to the asymmetric version by use of a chiral ligand in the copper catalyst

(Figure 1e). Here, we report an asymmetric catalysis using aromatic aldehydes as chiral α -alkoxyalkyl anions (Figure 1a, left). The reaction between aromatic aldehydes and aryl or allyl electrophiles with a silylboronate by the merger of a chiral copper–*N*-heterocyclic carbene (NHC) catalyst and a palladium–bisphosphine catalyst in a synergistic manner occurred with high enantioselectivities to deliver the three-component coupling products, chiral silyl-protected secondary alcohol derivatives.⁸

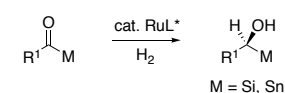
(a) Chiral α -alkoxyalkyl anion equivalents



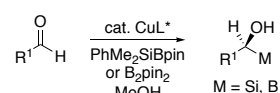
(b) Asymmetric lithiation



(c) Asymmetric reduction



(d) Asymmetric carbonyl addition



(e) Asymmetric catalysis using aldehydes as chiral α -alkoxyalkyl anions (this work)

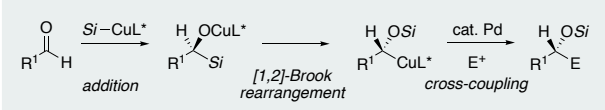


Figure 1. Generation of chiral α -alkoxyalkyl anions.

On the basis of our preliminary research with the achiral catalyst system,⁶ various chiral NHC ligands on copper were examined for catalytic activity and enantiocontrol in the cross-coupling between *o*-tolualdehyde **1a** (0.3 mmol) and bromochlorobenzene **2a** (0.2 mmol) with (dimethylphenylsilyl)boronic acid pinacol ester [PhMe₂SiB(pin)] (0.3 mmol) in the presence of palladium(II) acetylacetonate [Pd(acac)₂] (5 mol %), 1,1'-bis(diisopropylphosphino)ferrocene (DIPPF) (10 mol %), CuCl (25 mol %), a chiral imidazolium salt (25 mol %) and NaOSiMe₃ (0.25 mmol) as a base in toluene at 60 °C (Table 1).⁹ Copper–NHC complexes were prepared *in*

situ from CuCl, L·HBF₄, and NaOSiMe₃. The ring-saturated C₂-symmetric NHC ligand [(*S,S*)-L1],¹⁰ which has two stereogenic carbon centers in the imidazolidine ring with two mesityl groups at both nitrogen atoms, possessed slight catalytic activity (20%) and enantioselectivity (21% ee) (entry 1). Similar chiral NHC ligands bearing 3,5-di-*t*-butyl-phenyl (L2), 2-isopropyl-phenyl (L3)¹¹ or 2-biphenyl (L4)¹² groups instead of the mesityl groups in L1 were examined (entries 2–4). Among them, L4 was the most effective for the product yield (60%) and enantioselectivity (86% ee) (entry 4).

Table 1. Screening of chiral NHC ligands and bases for cross-coupling between **1a** and **2a**.^a The HBF₄ salts of L2, L5–L7 were newly synthesized in this study.

entry	Cu cat. (mol %)	NHC	base	temp.	yield (%)	ee (%) ^b
1	25	L1	NaOSiMe ₃	60	20	21
2	25	L2	NaOSiMe ₃	60	20	44
3	25	L3	NaOSiMe ₃	60	51	74
4	25	L4	NaOSiMe ₃	60	60	86
5	25	L5	NaOSiMe ₃	60	54	87
6	25	L6	NaOSiMe ₃	60	72	89
7	25	L7	NaOSiMe ₃	60	73	74
8 ^c	15	L6	NaOSiMe ₃	60	78	89
9 ^c	15	L6	NaOSiMe ₃	40	52	90
10	25	L6	NaOtBu	60	13	57
11	25	L6	NaOMe	60	0	—

Ligand for Pd

DIPPF

Ligand for Cu

(*S,S*)-L1–L7·HBF₄
C₂-symmetric

^a Reaction was carried out with **1a** (0.3 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), PhMe₂SiBpin (0.3 mmol), Pd(acac)₂ (5 mol%), DIPPF (10 mol %), CuCl/L·HBF₄ (15 or 25 mol %), alkoxide base (0.25 mmol) in toluene (1.0 mL) at 40 or 60 °C for 3 h. DIPPF, 1,1'-bis(diisopropylphosphino)ferrocene. ^b Enantiomeric excess determined by HPLC analysis. ^c NaOSiMe₃ (0.23 mmol) was used.

Next, we prepared a new chiral NHC ligand (L5) bearing a 2-(2,6-difluorophenyl)phenyl group instead of one of the 2-biphenyl groups in L4 to modify the steric hindrance in close proximity to the copper center. The Cu–L5 catalyst system imparted an enantioselectivity (87% ee) slightly better than the system with the non-fluorinated NHC ligand (L4) (entry 5). Changing the 2-biphenyl group of L5 to a 2-isopropylphenyl group (L6) increased the product yield (72%) and enantioselectivity (89% ee) (entry 6).

The Cu loading could be reduced to 15 mol % with a slightly increased yield and the high enantioselectivity remained unchanged (entry 8). The enantioselectivity was further increased to 90% ee by lowering the reaction temperature to 40 °C (entry 9). The use of the corresponding non-fluorinated NHC ligand L7 resulted in a significant reduction in enantioselectivity (entry 7). Thus, the fluoro groups in L6 were important.

The steric and electronic nature of the alkoxide moiety of the base was important (Table 1). Thus, the use of more basic NaOtBu instead of NaOSiMe₃ diminished the product yield and enantioselectivity (entry 10). This result might be due to the formation of achiral silyl(*tert*-butoxy)cuprate species upon partial dissociation of NHC ligand.¹³ A smaller and weaker alkoxide base NaOMe induced no reaction (entry 11).

Table 2. Substrate scope^a

Scope of Arylbromide with 1a		
(<i>R</i>)- 3ab 91% ee, 66% yield	3ac 87% ee, 70% yield	3ad 90% ee, 60% yield
3ae ^b 90% ee, 78% yield	3af 90% ee, 76% yield	3ag 92% ee, 53% yield
3ah ^b 90% ee, 58% yield	3ai 88% ee, 78% yield	3aj 89% ee, 67% yield
3ak 88% ee, 72% yield	3al ^b 84% ee, 56% yield	3am ^b 82% ee, 56% yield
Scope of Arylaldehyde with 2a		
(<i>S</i>)- 3ba ^b 90% ee, 36% yield	3ca ^c 91% ee, 60% yield (Pd/Cu 2.5/10 mol %)	3da ^b 82% ee, 61% yield
3ea ^c 83% ee, 86% yield (Pd/Cu 2.5/10 mol %)	3fa 81% ee, 39% yield	
3ga 80% ee, 61% yield	3ha ^b 71% ee, 36% yield	

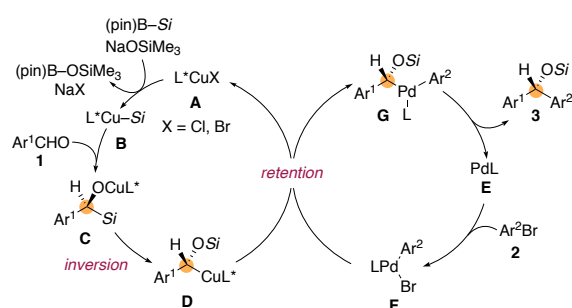
^a Reaction was carried out with **1** (0.3 mmol), **2** (0.2 mmol), PhMe₂SiBpin (0.3 mmol), Pd(acac)₂ (5 mol %), DIPPF (10 mol %), CuCl/L6·HBF₄ (15 mol %), NaOSiMe₃ (0.23 mmol) in toluene (1.0 mL) at 40 °C for 3 h.

Enantiomeric excess was determined by HPLC analysis. ^b The reaction temperature was increased to 60 °C. ^c Pd(acac)₂ (2.5 mol %), DIPPF (5 mol %), CuCl/L6-HBF₄ (10 mol %), and NaOSiMe₃ (0.22 mmol) were used and the reaction temperature was increased to 80 °C.

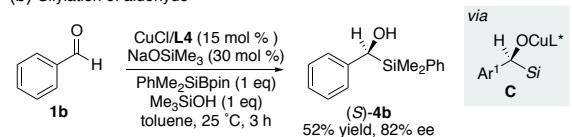
Table 2 summarizes the results of the reactions of various aryl bromides under the Cu–L6 catalyst system.¹⁴ Bromobenzene or 2-bromonaphthalene reacted with **1a** with high enantioselectivities (**3ab** and **3ac**). Due to the mildness of the reaction conditions, various functional groups were tolerated. For example, aryl bromides bearing fluoro, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, methoxycarbonyl, methoxy, benzyl ether, THP ether and pivaloyl substituents at the *meta*- or *para*-positions of the aromatic ring reacted to afford the corresponding chiral benzhydryl silyl ether products with high enantioselectivities (88–92% ees) (**3ad**–**3ak**). Heteroaryl bromides such as bromopyridine or bromothiophene were compatible with the enantioselective reaction (**3al** and **3am**).¹⁵

The range of aldehydes is also shown in Table 2.¹⁴ Benzaldehyde, *p*-tolualdehyde or *p*-tert-butyl-benzaldehyde reacted with **2a** with high enantioselectivities (**3ba**–**3da**). Functionalized benzaldehydes such as *m*-anisaldehyde, piperonal or 3-fluorobenzaldehyde underwent the coupling, giving the corresponding chiral benzhydryl silyl ethers with a useful level of enantioselectivities (**3ea**–**3ga**). The reaction with 3-thiophenecarboxaldehyde afforded the coupling product with moderate enantiocontrol (**3ha**). Aliphatic aldehydes and aromatic or aliphatic ketones did not participate in the reaction (data not shown).¹⁶

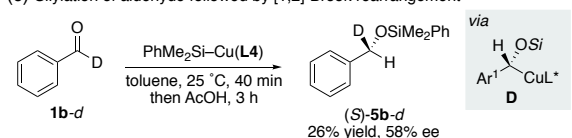
(a) Possible reaction pathway



(b) Silylation of aldehyde



(c) Silylation of aldehyde followed by [1,2]-Brook rearrangement



(d) Coupling between **1b** and **2a** using **L4**

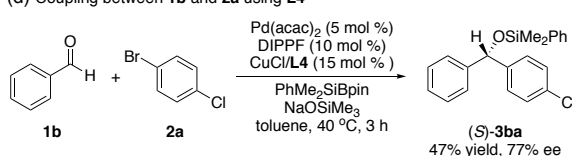


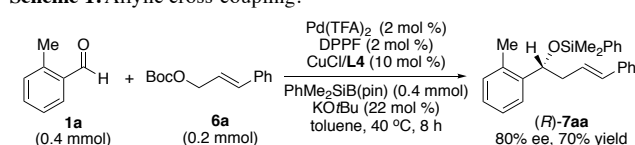
Figure 2. Mechanistic considerations.

A reaction mechanism consisting of two distinct catalytic cycles, namely copper and palladium catalysis, is illustrated in Figure 2a.^{6a} Initially, the reaction of a chiral NHC-ligated copper complex (**A**), a silylboronate and NaOSiMe₃ forms a silyl-copper(I) species (**B**) and trimethylsilyloxyboronate. The enantioselective addition of silylcopper(I) (**B**) across the C=O bond of aldehyde **1** produces a stereodefined α-silyl-substituted copper(I) alkoxide (**C**),^{4a} which subsequently undergoes stereospecific [1,2]-Brook rearrangement to give chiral α-silyloxybenzylcopper(I) species (**D**).¹⁷ Next, the stereospecific Cu/Pd transmetalation between **D** and arylpalladium(II) bromide (**F**), which is generated from oxidative addition of aryl bromide **2** to palladium(0)-bisphosphine complex (**E**), produces the corresponding chiral organopalladium(II) complex (**G**).¹⁸ Finally, reductive elimination from **G** releases the enantioenriched product **3**, regenerating the palladium(0) complex (**E**) for the next catalytic cycle.

To obtain stereochemical information on the present palladium/copper-catalyzed pathway, two-component reactions between aldehydes and a silylboronate were examined. For this study, we used **L4** instead of **L6** due to the instability of the *in situ* generated stoichiometric copper complex with **L6**. The copper-catalyzed carbonyl addition of a silylboronate to benzaldehyde **1b** using trimethylsilanol as a proton source occurred to give (*S*)-α-silyl-substituted benzyl alcohol **4b** in 52% isolated yield with 82% enantioselectivity (Figure 2b).¹⁹ Next, the reaction of a stoichiometric amount of a chiral silyl-copper(I) complex, which was prepared *in situ* from CuCl, **L4**-HBF₄, PhMe₂SiB(pin) and NaOtBu (1/1/1/2), with deuterated benzaldehyde-α-d1 (**1b-d**) was also performed without any proton sources (Figure 2c). The reaction gave, after addition of acetic acid, chiral deuterated benzyl silyl ether **5b-d** with (*S*) configuration.^{20,21} The stereochemical outcomes observed in the three-component reactions indicated the copper-mediated [1,2]-Brook rearrangement proceeded with inversion of configuration (**C** → **D**, Figure 2a).^{22,23} Additionally, comparison of the absolute configuration of **5b-d** with that of the benzhydryl silyl ether (**3ba**) obtained by the coupling reaction with aryl bromide (**2a**) indicated that the Cu/Pd transmetalation between a stereodefined α-silyloxybenzylcopper(I) species (**D**) and arylpalladium(II) intermediate (**F**) could occur with retention of configuration (**D** → **G**, Figure 2a).²⁴

Finally, the present reaction was not limited to aryl electrophiles as coupling partners, but was also applicable to different coupling partners. For example, the synergistic palladium/copper-catalyzed cross-coupling reaction using allylic carbonate **6a** occurred to produce enantioenriched chiral homoallylic alcohol derivative **7aa** with 80% ee in 70% yield (Scheme 1).¹⁴ Without significant modification of the reaction conditions, especially with respect to the chiral NHC ligand, a high enantiomeric purity of the product is guaranteed.

Scheme 1. Allylic cross-coupling.



In conclusion, asymmetric reactions between aromatic aldehydes and aryl bromides with a silylboronate occurred with high enantioselectivities to yield the three-component coupling products, chiral silyl-protected secondary alcohol derivatives. The reaction was enabled by the merging of a new chiral copper-*N*-heterocyclic carbene catalyst and a palladium-bisphosphine catalyst in a synergistic manner. Preliminary results showed that this palladium/copper catalysis is also amenable to the reaction of an allylic carbonate as the coupling partner. Our method features the catalytic generation of enantioenriched chiral α -alkoxyalkylcopper(I) intermediates from aldehydes and their subsequent palladium-catalyzed stereospecific cross-coupling with aryl or allyl electrophiles. This protocol provides a new umpolung strategy for catalytically forming a chiral α -alkoxyalkyl anion from an aromatic aldehyde for use in asymmetric synthesis. Mechanistic investigations aided by theoretical calculations are currently ongoing in our laboratory.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information. Experimental details and characterization data for all new compounds (PDF). This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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- (15) The reason for the slight drop in enantiomeric excess of **3al** and **3am** is unclear. The reaction of electron-rich aryl halides resulted in low product yield due to the slow oxidative addition step.
- (16) When an aliphatic aldehyde was used as a substrate, significant amounts of the corresponding α -silyl-substituted alcohol and acylsilane were obtained. This result suggested the Brook rearrangement in aliphatic aldehydes was slower than that in aromatic aldehydes.
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