



Accepted Article

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This manuscript has been accepted and appears as an Accepted Article online.

This work may now be cited as: *Chin. J. Chem.* **2020**, *38*, 10.1002/cjoc.202000132.

The final Version of Record (VoR) of it with formal page numbers will soon be published online in Early View: http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cjoc.202000132.

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ISSN 1001-604X • CN 31-1547/O6 mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cjoc www.cjc.wiley-vch.de



Silver-Mediated N-Trifluoromethylation of Amides and Peptides

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Cite this paper: Chin. J. Chem. 2019, 37, XXX—XXX. DOI: 10.1002/cjoc.201900XXX

Ve report herein the direct N-trifluoromethylation of N-H amides. Promoted by AgOTf and 2-fluoropyridine, the reaction of a variety of amides with Selectfluor, TMSCF₃ and CsF proceeds smoothly at room temperature leading to the corresponding N-trifluoromethylated products in satisfactory yields. he protocol is also applicable to amino acid derivatives, resulting in efficient and chemoselective N-trifluoromethylation of di- and tri-peptides with retention of configuration. A mechanism involving reductive elimination of Ag(III) intermediates to form N–CF₃ bonds is proposed.

Trifluoromethyl groups exhibit a profound effect in properties such as lipophilicity, permeability and metabolic stability, and thus serve as important structural motifs in pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals and materials. Trifluoromethylation of organic nolecules has therefore received considerable attention in the past decades.^[1] However, the research in this field mainly focuses on C–CF₃ bond formations.^[1] As a comparison, construction of N– F₃ bonds remains challenging. *N*-Trifluoromethyl amines are typically prepared indirectly by reaction of dithiocarbamates, thiocarbamoyl fluorides, formamides or related compounds with fluorinating reagents such as SF₄, dialkylaminosulfur trifluorides or AgF.^[2, 3] These approaches suffer from either harsh reaction conditions, the use of toxic reagents or poor functional group

atibility. Meanwhile, methods for direct introduction of CF₃ groups onto nitrogen atoms are rare and limited to electrophilic^[4] or radical^[5] N-trifluoromethylation of pyridines, azoles, imines or ulfoximines. The underdevelopment of N–CF₃ chemistry may also be attributed to the low stability of N-CF₃ amines that are rone to fluorine elimination because of the n(N) $\rightarrow \sigma^*(C-F)$ lectron donation. Aromatic and/or electron-withdrawing substitutions are generally required to make the amines isolable. lowever to our surprise, N-CF₃-substituted amides that are far nore stable than N-CF₃ amines are far less explored. Yet, among the known N-(trifluoromethyl)amides, some exhibit important iological activities such as high anti-fungal or anti-HIV properties,^[6] or serve as useful electrolyte additives for batteries.^[7] Of the few relevant synthetic reports, Rozen and oworkers described the synthesis of N-(trifluoromethyl)amides by fluorination of N-acyldithiocarbamates with BrF₃ (Scheme 1).^[8] Very recently, the Schoenebeck group introduced the reaction of

isothiocyanates, bis(trichloromethyl) carbonate and AgF to generate *N*-trifluoromethylcarbamoyl fluorides, which then engaged in the reaction with Grignard reagents to provide Ntrifluoromethylated amides.^[9] These indirect syntheses are not suitable for late-stage modification of amides. Direct Ntrifluoromethylation of *N*-H amides should be highly desirable given the low cost and easy availability of amides. However, there have been no reports to date of methods in his aspect. The few available procedures of electrophilic or radical Ntrifluoromethylation mentioned above^[4, 5] are not applicable to amides either. Also note that *N*-CF₃ amides are unlikely to be prepared from secondary *N*-CF₃ amines due to the instability and fast HF extrusion of the later. Herein we report the silvermediated, direct N-trifluoromethylation of *N*-H amides and peptides (Scheme 1).

Scheme 1 Synthesis of N-(trifluoromethyl)amides



This article has been accepted for publication and undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process which may lead to differences between this version and the Version of Record. Please cite this article as doi: 10.1002/cjoc.202000132

As a start, we selected N-methylbenzamide (1a) as the model substrate to explore the N-trifluoromethylation. After an extensive search of reaction conditions (see Tables S1–S7 in the Supporting Information for details), we were pleased to find that the reaction of 1a, AgOTf (1.1 equiv), 2-fluoropyridine (1.1 equiv), Selectfluor (1-chloromethyl-4-fluorodiazoniabicyclo[2,2,2]octane bis(tetrafluoroborate))^[10] (4 equiv), Ruppert–Prakash reagent^[11] (TMSCF₃, 5 equiv) and CsF (5 equiv) in dichloromethane chlorobenzene (3:1) solution at room temperature furnished the expected N-trifluoromethylation product 2a in 74% isolated yield (Intry 1, Table 1). Lowering the amount of Selectfluor to two equivalents led to a lower yield of 2a, while no 2a could be observed without Selectfluor (entries 2 and 3, Table 1). Switching me oxidant Selectfluor to N-fluorobis(benzenesulfonyl)imide (NFSI)^[12] resulted in a sharp drop in product yield (entry 4, Table Changing the CF₃ source to $(bpy)Zn(CF_3)_2$ (bpy = 2,2'pipyridine)^[13] or (bpy)Cu(CF₃)₃^[14] yielded no desired product 'ntries 5 and 6, Table 1). The silver salt AgOTf proved to be essential for the transformation, as evidenced by control e periments (entries 7 and 8, Table 1). As a comparison, the use of Cu(OTf)₂ in place of AgOTf failed to give any product **2a** (entry 9, Table 1). In addition, a suitable ligand was also required for the action (entry 10, Table 1), and 2-fluoropyridine turned out to be superior over other ligands screened (see Table S2 in SI). Finally, r ducing the loading of TMSCF₃ or CsF decreased the yield of 2a see Table S7 in SI).

 Table 1
 Optimization of reaction conditions



^o The reaction was carried out at 0.20 mmol scale in DCM (3.0 mL)–PhCl (1.0 mL) solution. ^b Isolated yield based on **1a**.

With the optimized conditions in hand (entry 1, Table 1), we set out to examine the scope of the method. As shown in Scheme 2, a number of N-methylbenzamides with either electronwithdrawing or electron-donating substituents on the aromatic ring all underwent N-trifluoromethylation, providing the expected products 2b-2o in satisfactory yields. Benzamides with different N-alkyl-substitutions also participated in the reaction to afford the corresponding products **2p–2s**. The protocol was also applicable to a variety of N-alkylalkanamides, as exemplified by the synthesis of 2t-2x. N-Arylamides could also be used as substrates to give N-CF₃ amides such as 2y, albeit in a low efficiency. The presence of a range of functional group was tolerated by the process. For example, ethers, ketones, esters, nitriles and aryl halides (F, Cl, Br) all proved to be compatible with the reaction. The broad substrate scope enabled late-stage modification of complex molecules, as evidenced by the efficient synthesis of 2z1–2z3. Nevertheless, the method had its limitation in that *N*-tert-butyl-substituted amides or lactams failed to produce the corresponding products (such as 2z4 and 2z5) under the optimized conditions, and the reason remained unclear. However, a brief survey on N-nucleophiles other than amides revealed that N-trifluoromethylation of phosphonamides and sulfonamides (to give 2z6 and 2z7) could also be achieved under the same conditions as above without further optimization. These results further expanded the substrate scope of the reaction.

Scheme 2 N-Trifluoromethylation of amides^[a]



^a Reaction conditions: **1** (0.20 mmol), AgOTf (0.22 mmol), 2-fluoropyridine).22 mmol), Selectfluor (0.80 mmol), TMSCF₃ (1.00 mmol), CsF (1.00 mmol), DCM (3.0 mL), PhCl (1.0 mL), rt, 24 h. Isolated yield based on **1**.

We then extended the method to the N-trifluoromethylation of α -amino acid derivatives. Given the vital role of α -amino acids and peptides in life sciences, their N-CF₃ derivatives should be an interesting target in biological and medicinal chemistry. As illustrated in Scheme 3, ethyl N-Benzoylglycinate underwent smooth N-trifluoromethylation furnishing the corresponding product **3a** in a high yield. The N-hexanoyl analog **3b** could also be produced similarly. The reaction of methyl N-acyl-L- phenylalaninate proceeded nicely providing the *N*-CF₃ amide **3c** in an excellent yield with retention of configuration. Moreover, when glycosyl N-acylphenylalaninate as a diastereomeric mixture (37:63) was subjected to the optimized conditions, the corresponding product 3d was obtained in the same diastereomeric ratio, thus confirming that the Ntrifluoromethylation had no influence on the stereochemistry. Interestingly, N-Boc-protected N'-cyclohexyl-valinamide engaged in the trifluoromethylation leading to the exclusive formation of N'-CF₃ amides **3e** while the NHBoc moiety remained intact. The inertness of carbamates in the reaction was further demonstrated by the failure of naphthalene-1-yl methylcarbamate towards Ntrifluoromethylation under the above optimized conditions. This unique chemoselectivity paved the road for selective Ntrifluoromethylation of peptides. For example, the reaction of dipeptide Boc-Phe-Gly-OEt afforded the trifluoromethylated product **3f** in 63% yield. Analogously, Boc-Phg-Phe-NMe₂ was transformed into Boc-Phg-N-CF₃-Phe-NMe₂ (3g) highly efficiently. In a similar fashion, N-Cbz-protected Ala-Gly-O^tBu was converted to Cbz-Ala-N-CF₃-Gly-O^tBu (3h). The strategy could be further applied to the N-trifluoromethylation of tripeptides. As an example, N-CF3 tripeptide 3i was readily achieved from Boc-Gly-Ile-Glu-OBn in a high efficiency. Thus the method offers a convenient route to late-stage modification of polypeptides.

Scheme 3 N-Trifluoromethylation of α -amino acid derivatives^[a]



^a See Scheme 2. ^b d.r. = = 37:63 for both **3d** and its precursor.

To gain further insight into the N-trifluoromethylation, the following mechanistic experiments were carried out. The reaction of *N*-cyclopropylhexanamide (**4**) under the optimized conditions afforded the N-trifluoromethylated product **5** in 61% yield while no ring-opening products could be detected (eq 1). This radical clock experiment pointed out that amidyl radicals were unlikely to be involved in the N-trifluoromethylation. A careful examination on the reactions of *N*-alkylamides leading to **2s** and **2v** showed that no remote aliphatic or benzylic C–H trifluoromethylation^[13b]

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byproducts could be observed, also suggesting that amidyl radicals capable of 1,5-H abstraction were not generated under the experimental conditions. Furthermore, control experiments revealed that, in the absence of an amide substrate, the reaction produced the complex^[15] [(CF₃)₄Ag(III)]⁻ exclusively, as demonstrated by ¹⁹F NMR analysis. Subsequent addition of amide **1a** into the resulting solution yielded no product **2a**, indicating that the stable [(CF₃)₄Ag(III)]⁻ complex was not the active species responsible for the N-trifluoromethylation. On the other hand, ¹⁹F NMR monitoring on the N-trifluoromethylation of **1a** showed t¹ at, along with the increasing formation of product **2a**, the ((CF₃)₄Ag(III)]⁻ complex was also accumulated, implying that the two processes were competing with each other (see SI for aetails).



A plausible mechanism is then proposed as depicted in Figure Interaction of AgOTf with 2-fluoropyridine and CF₃⁻ anion derived from TMSCF₃/CsF generates Ag(I)–CF₃ intermediate^[16] that is then oxidized by Selectfluor to give the Ag(III)-CF₃ species $A^{[17, 18]}$ In the meantime, deprotonation of an amide by CF₃⁻ anion gives the corresponding amidyl anion. Ligand exchange of A with the amidyl anion produces the Ag(III)-complex **B**, which ndergoes reductive elimination to provide the Ntr fluoromethylated amide. Alternatively, ligand exchange of Intermediate A with CF₃⁻ anions may also take place to form the unreactive [(CF₃)₄Ag(III)]⁻ complex. This competing process counts for the requirement of stoichiometric amount of AgOTf. the inability of N-tert-butyl amides (such as 1z4) in Ntrifluoromethylation might be attributed to the steric effect in etarding the formation of key intermediate **B**. While the reason is unclear for the no-reaction of lactams and carbamates, the Informational difference between lactams and ordinary amides might play a role. Our best guess is that the coordination of a lactam or carbamate to A should lead to intermediate C that is destabilized by the possible lone pair-lone pair electron pulsion^[19] between the carbonyl oxygen and the fluorine atoms of the adjacent CF₃ group. Such an interaction is not present in intermediate **B**. More mechanistic investigation is certainly quired to have a detailed understanding on the mechanism.



Figure 1 Proposed mechanism.

In conclusion, we have successfully developed the silvermediated N-trifluoromethylation of N-H amides, providing a straightforward access to N-CF₃ amides. The unprecedented protocol also enables the efficient and chemoselective Ntrifluoromethylation of polypeptides. As the procedure is operationally simple and the conditions are mild, the method should find application in the synthesis of important Ntrifluoromethylated molecules.

Supporting Information

The supporting information for this article is available on the WWW under https://doi.org/10.1002/cjoc.2018xxxxx.

Acknowledgement

This project was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (Grants 21421002, 21532008, 21871285 and 21971253), by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (Grants XDB20020000 and ZDBS-LY-SLH026) and by Zhejiang Provincial Natural Science Foundation of China (Grant LY20B020008).

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(The following will be filled in by the editorial staff) Manuscript received: XXXX, 2019

Manuscript revised: XXXX, 2019

- Manuscript accepted: XXXX, 2019
- Accepted manuscript online: XXXX, 2019

Version of record online: XXXX, 2019

Entry for the Table of Contents



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