

Letter

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ACS Catal., Just Accepted Manuscript • Publication Date (Web): 22 Jan 2019

Downloaded from http://pubs.acs.org on January 23, 2019

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Chiral Brønsted Acid Catalyzed Asymmetric Oxidation of Sulfenamide by Using H₂O₂: A Versatile Access to Sulfinamide and Sulfoxide with High Enantioselectivity

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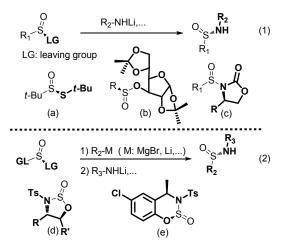
ABSTRACT: Herein we describe an example of catalytic asymmetric synthesis of sulfinamides. Aromatic sulfenamides were chosen as useful substrates due to the indispensable N-H bond, which could form an efficient hydrogen bond with chiral phosphoric acid. H_2O_2 (35%) was used as the terminal oxidant for preparation of sulfinamides in high yields and enantioselectivities, which could be easily derivatized to sulfoxides and other sulfinamides without loss the enantioselectivity.

KEYWORDS: Sulfinamide; Sulfoxide; Asymmetric oxidation; Sulfenamide; Chiral Brønsted acid

The demand for optically pure complex organic molecules is continuously growing due to their pervasive applications in agrochemicals, fragrances, cosmetics, fine chemical synthesis, and especially in worldwide-sold drugs. Asymmetric catalysis, capable of creating hundreds or thousands of molecules of the chiral product per catalyst molecule, has emerged as a new, exciting and environmentally friendly methodology in modern synthetic chemistry, complementing bio- and metal catalysis. Catalytic asymmetric oxidations, particularly those involving oxygen atom transfer, constitute an important class of enantioselective reactions, which have propelled the development of asymmetric catalysis during the last several decades. For example, intensive effort has been devoted to asymmetric oxygenative transformations such as epoxidations¹, sulfoxidations², Baeyer-Villiger oxidations³, olefin cisdihydroxylation reactions⁴, α -Hydroxylation of carbonyl compounds⁵, etc.

In view of the importance of the asymmetric oxidations as well as the continuous interest of highly atom-efficient and green reagent(s) that co-produce only innocuous waste, H_2O_2 is a desirable terminal oxidant because it is inexpensive and does not produce environmentally toxic byproducts. Meanwhile, most of the asymmetric oxidations with H_2O_2 , actually rely on the nucleophilic properties of H_2O_2 , forming covalent adducts with catalysts or electrophilic substrates. Recently List and coworkers proposed an alternative scenario, in which H_2O_2 could be electrophilically activated toward prochiral nucleophilic sulfides with a confined chiral Brønsted acid catalyst, affording sulfoxides in high enantioselectivity.⁶

Scheme 1. Selected examples for preparation of sulfinamides from different types of chiral reagent



Actually, sulfoxides have widespread applications in modern organic synthesis such as auxiliaries, ligands, and constitute important biologically active compounds, including several marketed drugs. Therefore, chemists have been pursuing a general, metal-free, and highly enantioselective catalytic sulfoxidation reaction since the first enantioselective catalysts for the oxidation of sulfide in 1984. Meanwhile, sulfinamide as an important pharmaceutical intermediate can mediate the synthesis of compounds containing chiral amine functionalities⁷. Moreover, their utility has been extended to be used as chiral ligands for many catalytic asymmetric transformatios⁸. Although the power of chiral sulfinamide reagents in synthetic chemistry has long been recognized, methods for their synthesis have emerged slowly.

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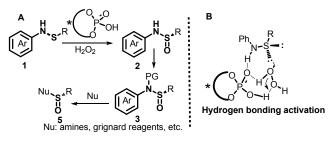
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In 1997, Ellman's group reported catalytic asymmetric oxidation of tert-butyl disulfide to tert-butyl tertbutanethiosulfinate intermediate by vanadium catalysts⁹, which have been widely used for preparation of tertbutanesulfinamide until now,¹⁰ (a, Scheme 1, eq. 1). The inadequacy lies in the odorous mercaptan byproduct which is neither in line with atomic economics nor consistent with the requirements of green chemistry. In fact, chiral auxiliaries were frequently used for preparation of chiral sulfinamides in high enantioselectivities. For example, diacetone-d-glucose¹¹(b), Menthol,¹² and Quinine,¹³ amino $alchol^{14}(c)$, were efficiently used to prepare optically pure sulfoxides or sulfinamides. Moreover, chiral sulfinyl transfer reagents which could be used for obtaining different types of sulfoxides or sulfinamides via two sequential nucleophilic additions, were developed¹⁵(\mathbf{d} , \mathbf{e} , scheme 1, eq. 2). In this method, Grignard reagent was initially used to nucleophilic attack sulfinyl group by cleavage of N-S bound. Then the resulting intermediate reacted with lithium amide by amino-ester exchange and afforded the corresponding chiral sulfinamides. Auxiliary-based approaches possess obvious disadvantages in comparison with asymmetric catalytic synthesis. Herein we envisioned an efficient approach for directly asymmetric oxidation of sulfenamides to sulfinamides with H₂O₂ as terminal oxidant.

Scheme 2. Direct oxidation of sulfenamide for obtaining sulfinamides and their derivatives



As we know, sulfenamides 1 with a sulfur-nitrogen bond, has garnered great attention in the chemical community over the years due to their unique bond properties and widespread applications, (Scheme 2 A). As a result, the availability of them is supported by many synthetic approaches developed by our and others' groups. ¹⁶ Based on the work of List⁶ and Sunoj¹⁷, we envisioned that the N-H of the substrate sulfenamide 1 can make a great difference due to the additional hydrogen bonds with bi-functional phosphoric acid (Scheme 2, B). On the one hand, the phosphoric acid catalyst could form hydrogen bond with H₂O₂ and increase its electrophilic property towards the nucleophilic sulfur¹⁶. On the other hand, the hydrogen bond between phosphoric acid and sulfenamide could efficiently reduce the spatial distance between hydrogen peroxide and sulfenamide, which could not only promotes the reaction but also increase the enantioselectivity of the product. Here we demonstrated that this is an inexpensive and environmentally friendly process for obtaining sulfinamides 2 with high enantioselectivities. Moreover, chiral sulfoxides 5 or other

sulfinamides could be easily derived from the obtained sulfinamides without losing the enantioselectivities (Scheme 2).

To begin with our research, we investigated asymmetric oxidation of sulfenamide 1a by using BINOL-derived phosphoric acid catalysts 4a. To our satisfaction, the reaction was clean without the formation of over-oxidation byproduct sulfonamide. Encouraged by this initial result, we performed an extensive screening of reaction temperature, oxidant equivalent, and additive (see the Supporting Information). The yield and enantiomeric excess (ee) value could be efficiently increased when the reaction was run with DCM as solvent, $1.5 \text{ eg. } H_2O_2$ as oxidant, and magnesium sulfate as moisture absorbent (Table 1). The result demonstrated that a catalytic amount of phosphoric acid 4a promoted the oxidation of 1a to sulfinamide 2a in moderate yield (57%) and low ee (27%) (entry 1). Then we screened other BINOL-derived phosphoric acid catalysts. Fortunately, both the enantioselectivity and yield were improved with 4i as catalyst (entries 2-10). Therefore, we rescreened the reaction solvents with 4j (see the Supporting Information, Table S II). The results demonstrated that the mixture of CCl₄: n-hexane (3:1) was the optimal solvent (entry 11). Finally, we found **4k** was the optimal catalyst with better yield and ee value (entries 12-13). Based on the above screening experiments, we obtained sulfinamide 2a in 85% yield and 92% ee. The final optimal reaction condition is as following: 1 eq. sulfenamide and 1.5 eq H₂O₂ reacted at 0 °C with CCl₄: nhexane (3: 1) as solvent, MgSO₄ as additive, and 5 mol % 4k as catalyst.

Table 1. Catalyst screening

$ \begin{array}{c} $	S-1-BU 35% aq	0.05 eq) H ₂ O ₂ (1.5 eq) 4,DCM 0 °C 2a 4a C ₆ H ₅ 4b 9-anthyl 4c 2,4,6 <i>i</i> -Pr ₃ C ₆ 4d 9-phenanthyl 4e 1-pyrenyl 4f 10-phenylant	4j 4k
entry ^a	catalyst	yield (%) ^c	ee (%) ^d
1	4a	57	27
2	4b	64	37
3	4c	60	31
4	4d	62	31
5	4e	69	24
6	4f	65	25
7	4g	54	22
8	4h	72	41
9	6i	62	39
10	4j	75	66
11 ^b	4j	77	81
12 ^b	4k	85	92
13 ^b	41	74	79

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^a Performed at 0 °C in CH ₂ Cl ₂ (0.1 M), 5% Catalyst, MgSO ₄ (30
mg). ^b Performed in 0.1 M CCl ₄ : n-hexane (3:1). ^c Isolated yield.
^d Determined by chiral HPLC.

Table 2. Investigation of the aromatic amine scopes

R		eq), H ₂ O ₂ ₄ , CCl ₄ :n-h 0 °C		↓ S H ^(S) ^{t-Bu}
	1	0.0		2
entry	R	2	yield(%) ^a	ee ^b (%)
1	Н	2a	85	92
2	4-CH ₃	2b	87	93
3	2-CH ₃	2c	76	91
4	4-CH ₃ O	2d	71	54
5	$4-C_2H_5O$	2e	65	78
6	4- CF ₃	2f	92	93
7	3,5-(CF ₃) ₂	2g	87	95
8	4-NO ₂	2h	88	91
9	$4-CO_2C_2H_5$	2i	82	90
10	4-Cl	2j	94	93
11	3-C1	2k	95	94
12	4-Br	21	88	95
13	3-Br	2m	91	93
14	2-F	2n	77	87
15	4-F	20	89	93
16	4-I	2p	92	93
17	3,5-Cl ₂	2q	96	99
18	2-Cl-4-CF ₃	2r	82	99
19	2-CH ₃ O-4-Cl	2s	83	95
^a Isolat	ed yield on 0.1 mmc	ol scale. ^b C	Configuration a	according to

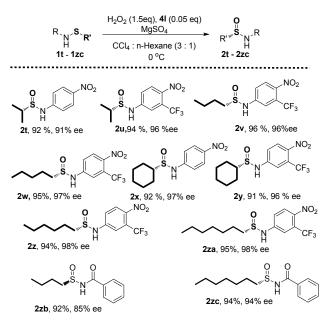
^a Isolated yield on 0.1 mmol scale. ^bConfiguration according to literature¹⁸.

Then we began to investigate the substrates scopes with different aromatic amines under the optimal reaction condition. A remarkably broad range of sulfenamides could be converted to the corresponding sulfenamides with high yield and enantioselectivity (Table 2). Electronic effect was reflected obviously after various electron-poor substrates and electronrich substrates were examined. For aromatic amines with methyl substituents, the high enantioselectivity and pleasant yield were obtained (2b and 2c). The slightly lower yield of 2c (compared with 2b) indicates that the ortho-methyl group on the benzene ring may have a steric effect which inhibits the progress of the reaction. When there was a stronger electrondonating substituent like methoxy or ethoxy (entries 4-5), both the yield and ee value of the product decreased (2d and 2e). We speculated that the acidity of the protons on the sulfenamides was weakened due to the electron donating group on the aromatic ring. Therefore the hydrogen bonding ability between the N-H and P=O was greatly crippled. For this reason, we envisioned that sulfenamides with electron-withdrawing substituent on the benzene ring like trifluoromethyl or nitro, could afford the desired product with pleasant results due to the

improved acidity of the N-H and the enhanced the hydrogen bonding property between N-H and P=O. Expectedly, high enantioselectivity and yield were obtained, (entries 6-9). Finally halogen-substituents whether it is ortho, meta or para position on the benzene ring were explored (entries 10-17). The pleasant yield (77-96%) and good ee value (87-99%) were obtained. Interestingly when halogen substituent on the phenyl ring, both electron withdrawing or electron donating groups were contained, pleasant enantioselectivity and yield were also obtained (entries 18-19). Meanwhile, sulfenamides prepared from aliphatic amine cannot be oxidized to the corresponding product (data not shown), presumably due to the decreased acidity of the N-H proton.

On the other hand, sulfenamides with different substituents on the sulfur were also screened. The results demonstrated that the enantioselectivity dropped slightly when the tert-butyl group on the sulfur atom was replaced with small alkyl group. Therefore we optimized the reaction conditions based on these substrates (see supporting information). The results showed that pleasant yield and enantioselectivity were obtained simply by replacing the catalyst 4k with 4l (scheme 3). Then we tried to investigate the substrates scopes with different substituents such as butyl, pentyl, cyclohexyl, hexyl or heptyl on the sulfur. Sulfenamides with short chain (2v, 2w) or long chain (2z, 2za), straight chain (2t, 2u, 2x, 2v) or branched chain (2v, 2w, 2z, 2za), could be smoothly transformed to the corresponding sulfonamides with high yields (91-96%) and ee values (91-98%). Based on the above reaction results, we found the acidity of the N-H of the aromatic sulfenamides were critical for the reaction. Therefore, sulfenamides prepared from benzamide were investigated under the optimal reaction condition. To our delight, the corresponding sulfinamides (2zb, 2zc) were obtained with high yield and good enantioselectivity.

Scheme 3. Substrate scopes of the sulfenamides with different alkyl substituents



Then our attentions were turned to derivatize the obtained sulfinamides, (Scheme 4). Inspired by the work of chiral sulfinyl transfer reagent¹⁵, we envisioned that the aromatic

amine with a protection group might be regarded as leaving group when reacted with nucleophiles such as Grignard reagent or amine metal salt. Therefore, the obtained sulfinamide 2a was transformed to 3 with Boc protection group in quantitative yield. Then different types of Grignard reagent were used to react with 3 and afforded the corresponding sulfoxides (5a-5f) easily with high yield (70-95%). Moreover, enantioselectivity was maintained except 5d and 5e with a slight decrease. On the other hand, when LDA was used as a base, sulfinamide 3 could be smoothly transformed to the corresponding sulfinamide 2d and 2e in high yield and ee with converse configuration. Interestingly, it's difficult to obtain them with pleasant ee by direct oxidation of the corresponding sulfenamide (Entries 4-5, Table 2). What's more, Benzylamine could be easily used to produce N-benzyl sulfinamide 6a in moderate yield and pleasant ee. It should be pointed out that sulfinamides 2t-2za were difficult to derivatize into the corresponding sulfoxides due to the failure to add a protection group or degraded during reaction with Grignard reagent. However, we found that the sulfinamides with benzamide (2zb, 2zc) could be easily transformed to the corresponding sulfoxides directly without the protection group. The corresponding sulfoxides (5g, 5h) were obtained with moderate yield and good enantioselectivity. Finally, chiral ligand 7 that has been applied as catalyst in the 1,4-addition of boronic acids to α , β -unsaturated ketones¹⁹ could be easily prepared and used.

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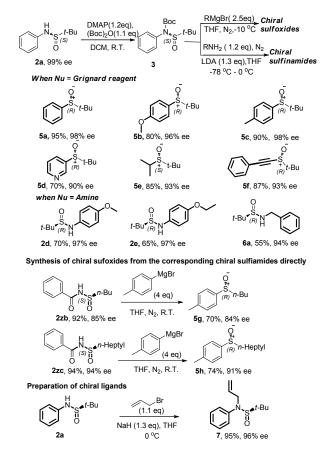
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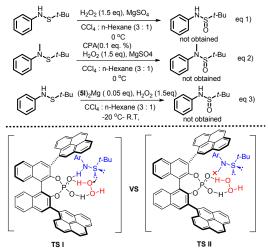
Scheme 4. Derivatization of sulfinamides



Finally, our attentions were focused on the exploration of the possible reaction mechanism. We proposed that the H_2O_2 was activated by chiral phosphoric acid according to our

experiments and other researcher's work^{6, 20}. First of all, H_2O_2 couldn't oxidize sulfenamide without the addition of phosphoric catalyst (eq. 1, Scheme 5). Secondly, the hydrogen bonding between the chiral phosphoric acid and the substrate N-H is also critical because the N-CH₃ substrate couldn't be oxidized (eq. 2, Scheme 5). Moreover, the ee values and yields were reduced when the acidity of the protons on the arylamine was weakened (entries 4-5, Table 2). Therefore, we proposed a probable oxidation transition state (**TSI**, Scheme 5): The hydrogen bond was formed by phosphoric acid and H₂O₂ to fix and activate H₂O₂; another hydrogen bond between the P=O of phosphoric acid and N-H of sulfenamide help sulfenamide to approach the reaction site.

Scheme 5. Mechanism investigations



Sulfinamide with high enantioselectivity

not obtained the corresponding sulfinamide

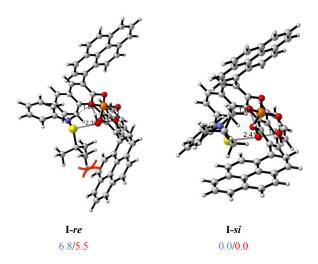


Figure 1. Located transition state structures with relative energies in $\Delta\Delta E_{sol}$ (blue) and $\Delta\Delta G_{sol}$ (red) in kcal mol⁻¹. DFT-computed energies were applied at the M06-2X/def2tzvp//B3LYP-D3/6-31G** level of theory.

To verify our proposal, DFT calculations²² were performed on this catalytic model. After conformer searching, two preferred transition states which can obtain R- and S- products with lowest energy barriers were located (Figure 1). There is a strong hydrogen bond between the N-H of sulfenamide and the 1

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P=O of phosphoric acid due to the length of this bond is around 2 1.84-1.86 Å which can help substrate approach catalyst. 3 Comparing two transition states, TS I-re leads to a higher free 4 energy barrier than TS I-si by 5.5 kcal mol-1 as the result of 5 steric compulsion between tert-butyl of sulfenamide and 3,3'-6 aromatic substituent of catalyst 41 (Figure 1). These calculated 7 results indicate that the (S)-products should be formed 8 preferentially, which is consistent with the experimental 9 observations. As a result, the activation and the transfer of 10 oxygen atom from H₂O₂ to sulfenamide was controlled by 11 phosphoric acid simultaneously so as to keep the stereoselectivity of the product. Therefore, the methylated 12 sulfenamide could not be oxidized due to the missing of the 13 hydrogen bond (TS II). Meanwhile, to determine that the 14 catalytic action comes from phosphoric acid rather than Mg-15 phosphate, chiral Mg-phosphate (4l)₂Mg was prepared from 4l 16 and Mg(O-t-Bu)₂.²¹ However, the corresponding sulfinamide 17 was not formed even at room temperature, (eq. 3, Scheme 5). 18 Moreover, we found that the reaction yield and ee could be 19 improved and finally maintained after the addition of excess 20 anhydrous MgSO₄, which might preclude the possibility that 21 water takes part in the transition state ²⁰, (see supporting 22 information). 23 24

In summary, we have developed an efficient method for obtaining chiral sulfinamides through asymmetric oxidation of sulfenamides with aqueous H_2O_2 as terminal oxidant. To the best of our knowledge, this is unprecedented for preparation of chiral sulfinamides due to the fact that they were prepared indirectly through resolving, chiral reagent, or chiral auxiliaries up to the present. Meanwhile, this procedure is more in line with atomic economic benefits and green chemistry considering the following advantages: environmentally benign aqueous H_2O_2 (35%) as the oxidant, organocatalysis, very clean reaction without over-oxidation byproduct, high levels of yield (up to 96%) and enantioselectivity (up to 98%), easy workup, etc. Moreover, the chiral sulfinamide obtained could be easily derivatized to most of the chiral sulfoxides or other sulfinamides in high yields and enantioselectivities.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information.

Experimental procedures and compound characterization. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <u>http://pubs.acs.org</u>.

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Acknowledgement.

We are grateful for financial support from the Youth Innovation Promotion Association CAS (2018402); the Natural Science Foundation of Sichuan province, China (2017JY0055); the Innovative Team of Sichuan Province (grant numbers 2017TD0021, 2012SZ0219). The numerical calculations in this paper have been done on the supercomputing system in the Supercomputing Center of University of Science and Technology of China.

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Chiral Brønsted Acid Catalyzed Asymmetric Oxidation of Sulfenamide by Using H₂O₂: A Versatile Access to Sulfinamide and Sulfoxide with High Enantioselectivity `**s**´^R ·S.....: H_2O_2 Ĭ O Ar Ph CPA 5 mol% 29 examples >96%, >98% ee Via mild reaction conditions Hydrogen bonding environmentally benign diverse applications activation **ACS Paragon Plus Environment**