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Lewis acid catalyzed asymmetric halohydrin reactions of chiral α , β -unsaturated carboxylic acid derivatives with *N*-halosuccinimide (NXS) as the halogen source

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Abstract—Lewis acid catalyzed asymmetric halohydrin reactions—(halohydroxylation as well as halomethoxylation) of chiral α,β unsaturated carboxylic acid derivatives were performed using *N*-halosuccinimide (NXS; X = Br, I) as the halogen source. Regioand *anti*-selectivity of 100% and moderate to good diastereoselectivity with good yields were observed when Oppolzer's sultam was used as the chiral auxiliary. Among the Lewis acids, Yb(OTf)₃ was found to be the best catalyst. Alkenoyl and cinnamoyl substrates smoothly underwent bromohydrin reactions and the more electron-rich cinnamoyl substrates preferred to undergo iodohydrin reactions. However, electron-deficient cinnamoyl substrates did not respond to this Lewis acid catalyzed halohydrin reaction with NXS (X = Cl, Br, I). © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

The 1,2-halo functionalization of olefins, for example, halohydrination, (halohydroxylation and haloalkoxylation) is an important transformation in organic chemistry.¹ The product halogen-containing compounds are versatile for the synthesis of pharmaceuticals, dyes, flame retardants, agrochemicals and speciality chemicals.² The study of catalytic, highly regioselective and asymmetric halohydrin forming reactions of olefins, especially of electron-deficient olefins, still remains an important challenge to organic chemists.³

Regioselective and asymmetric halohydrin formation of α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acid derivatives can provide chiral carboxyhalohydrins and α -halo- β -hydroxy/alkoxy carboxylic acid derivatives. These are versatile and useful synthetic intermediates because of their transformations to a variety of important compounds. These moieties are also either present in or are precursors to biologically active compounds.^{4,5} In our efforts to provide new asymmetric methods for the halohydrin forming reactions of α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acid

derivatives,⁶ we describe in this Letter, a Lewis acid catalyzed asymmetric halohydrin reaction, a halohydroxylation as well as halomethoxylation, of chiral α , β -unsaturated carboxylic acid derivatives using *N*halosuccinimide (NXS; X = Br, I) as the halogen source, in which 100% regioselectivity and with diastereoselectivities of up to 82:18 of the *anti*- α -halo- β -hydroxy/ methoxy carbonyl compounds are demonstrated with good yields.

It is known in the literature that α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compounds undergo halohydrin forming reactions with NBS/NIS in the presence of H_2SO_4 .^{5b,d,7} Initial studies of halohydroxylation of N-cinnamoyl-2oxazolidinone 1a⁸ with NBS/NIS in different aqueous organic solvents such as CH₃COCH₃, CH₃CN, THF, 1,4-dioxane, DME, DMF and DMSO at 25 °C (rt) showed that in aqueous CH₃CN only, 1a underwent bromohydroxylation. It gave a mixture of the carboxybromohydrins 2a and $\bar{2}a^\prime$ and the dibromocarbonyl compounds 3a/3a' after 26 h when an excess of NBS (2.5 equiv) was used and the same reaction in the presence of H_2SO_4 gave a mixture of products within 6 h. These observations prompted us to search for an effective catalyst for the asymmetric halohydrin forming reactions of chiral α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compounds with NBS. We screened different Lewis acids as catalysts for this halohydrin forming reaction (Table 1). The

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Table 1. Lewis acid catalysts for the halohydroxylation of 1 with NBS^a



Entry	Substrate	ML_n	<i>t</i> (h)	Ratio ^b (2+2':3/3')	dr ^b (2:2')	Yield ^c (%)
1	1a	None	26	63:37	50:50	80
2	1a	InCl ₃	1		Mixture of products	
3	1a	$In(OTf)_3$	1.5		Mixture of products	
4	1a	MgBr ₂	9	<05:95	ND	91
5	1a	$Zn(OTf)_3$	6	78:22	55:45	92
6	1a	Y(OTf) ₃	5	78:22	54:46	90
7	1a	Sm(OTf) ₃	7	72:28	52:48	78
8	1a	Yb(OTf) ₃	2	87:13	55:45	92 (89) ^d
9	1b	Yb(OTf) ₃	0.5	>99:01	58:42	97 (98)

^a Lewis acid catalyzed halohydroxylation was performed with 1.5 equiv of NBS and 0.15 equiv of metal salts in 5% aqueous CH₃CN at rt (25 °C). ^b Determined from the ¹H NMR spectrum of the crude reaction mixture; well separated CHBr ¹H NMR signals were used to assign the ratio of 2/2' and 3/3' and the dr of 2 and 2'.

^c Combined yields of halohydroxy- and dibromo-carbonyl compounds, determined by ¹H NMR analysis of the crude reaction mixture with naphthalene as internal standard. Yields in parenthesis refer to the combined isolated yields of the bromohydroxy- and dibromo-carbonyl compounds.

^d Isolated yields of the bromohydroxycarbonyl compounds 2a (42%) and 2a' (36%) and the dibromocarbonyl compounds 3a/3a' (11%). ND: Not determined.

metal halides and acetates, such as CuCl₂, NiCl₂, CoCl₂, Co(OAc)₂, Ni(OAc)₂ and Cu(OAc)₂ did not show any catalytic effect for the halohydroxylation of 1a with NBS. The metal triflates, such as Zn(OTf)₂, Y(OTf)₃, Sm(OTf)₃ and Yb(OTf)₃ as catalysts, showed good results (entries 5–8). Among these, $Yb(OTf)_3$ was found to be the best catalyst for the halohydroxylation of **1a**. When 1a was treated with NBS (1.5 equiv) in 5% aqueous acetonitrile (v/v) in the presence of the Yb(OTf)₃ catalyst (15 mol %) at rt it gave the desired bromohydrins 2a and 2a' in good yield within 2 h, along with a minor amount of the dibromocarbonyl compounds 3a/3a' (entry 8).^{9,10} Similarly the electron-rich cinnamoyl substrate 1b underwent clean bromohydroxylation with NBS (1.2 equiv) in the presence of the Yb(OTf)₃ catalyst.¹¹ In this case no dibromocarbonyl compound **3b**/ 3b' was observed (entry 9). However, the diastereoselectivities of the above bromohydroxylations were rather low.

Since the oxazolidinone chiral auxiliary gave low diastereoselectivity for the Yb(OTf)₃ catalyzed bromohydroxylation of **1a** and **1b**, we examined the Yb(OTf)₃ catalyzed bromohydroxylation of α , β -unsaturated carboxylic acid derivatives possessing Oppolzer's sultam chiral auxiliary.¹² When the Yb(OTf)₃ catalyzed bromohydroxylation of (2*R*)-*N*-cinnamoylbornanesultam **4a** was performed under the same reaction conditions, moderate diastereoselectivity was observed with good yields (Table 2; entry 1). This Yb(OTf)₃ catalyzed halohydroxylation reaction was further studied using a variety of cinnamoyl substrates containing electrondonating and -withdrawing substituents on the aromatic ring as well as different alkenoyl substrates. It was found that the electron-rich cinnamoyl substrates **4b**, **4c** and

E-4g and the β -(2-naphthyl)enoyl substrate 4h smoothly underwent bromohydroxylation (entries 2, 3, 7 and 8) under the same reaction conditions.¹³ The more electron-rich cinnamoyl substrates 4d, 4e and $4f^{14}$ preferred to undergo iodohydroxylation efficiently with NIS (entries 4–6) and yielded the electrophilic bromination product of the aromatic moiety as the major product with NBS. However, the electron-deficient cinnamovl substrates 4i and 4j did not undergo halohydroxylation under the same reaction conditions, even with the use of excess reagents under different reaction conditions using either NCS, NBS or NIS as the halogen source. The alkenoyl substrates **4k** and **4l** and also the E- α -methyl alkenoyl substrate E-4m responded to the bromohydroxylation with 100% regioselectivity in contrast to the Ag(I)-promoted halohydrin reactions of N-alkenoyl-2oxazolidinone.⁶ It is important to note that the substrates 4k, 4l and E-4m did not undergo any halohydroxylation in the absence of Lewis acid.

The pure α -halo- β -hydroxycarbonyl compounds **5** and **6** were fully characterized by ¹H and ¹³C NMR and elemental (CHN) analysis¹³ and their configurational assignments were made by confirming the stereochemistry of the major isomer **5b**. Pure **5b** was transformed to the epoxide **7b** (Scheme 1) and the optical rotation of **7b** ($[\alpha]_D^{22.4}$ +212.2, (*c* 1.0, MeOH)) was compared with the literature data ($[\alpha]_D^{2}$ -205 (*c* 1.0, MeOH)).¹⁵

β-Methoxy-α-amino acids are unusual amino acid constituents of many biologically active cyclic peptide and depsipeptide antibiotics such as callipeltines,¹⁶ papuamides,¹⁷ cyclomarins¹⁸ and discokiolide.¹⁹ α-Halo-βmethoxycarboxylic acid derivatives are important precursors to β-methoxyamino acids.^{6a} The Yb(OTf)₃

Table 2. $Yb(OTf)_3$ catalyzed halohydroxylation of (2R)-N-enoylbornanesultams 4

$4 \qquad \qquad$							
Entry	Substrate	R^1	\mathbb{R}^2	<i>t</i> (h)	Х	dr ^a (5:6)	Yield ^b (%)
1	4a	C ₆ H ₅	Н	8	Br	64:36	80 (12)
2	4b	4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	Н	2	Br	72:28	93
3	4c	$4-BnOC_6H_4$	Н	3	Br	74:26	91
4	4d	$3,4-MeOC_6H_3$	Н	1.5	Ι	75:25	94
5	4 e	4-BnO-3-MeOC ₆ H ₃	Н	3	Ι	76:24	90
6	4f	3,4,5-MeOC ₆ H ₂	Н	3	Ι	78:22	71°
7	E-4g	4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	CH_3	6	Br	82:18	95
8	4h	2-Naphthyl	Н	10	Br	65:35	88
9	4i	$2-ClC_6H_4$	Н	48	Cl/Br/I	N	IR
10	4j	$2-NO_2C_6H_4$	Н	48	Cl/Br/I	N	IR
11	4k	CH ₃	Н	36	Br	72:28	78 (20)
12	41	$C_{6}H_{13}$	Н	36	Br	68:32	81 (10)
13	<i>E</i> -4m	$C_{6}H_{13}$	CH_3	36	Br	70:30	80 (12)

Yields in parentheses refer to the isolated yield of dibromocarbonyl compounds. NR: No reaction.

^a Determined from the ¹H NMR spectrum of the crude reaction mixture.

^b Combined isolated yields of pure 5 and 6 after column chromatography.

^c Isolated yield of isomer **5f**.¹⁴



Scheme 1.

Table 3. Yb(OTf)₃ catalyzed halomethoxylation of 4

	N N	$R^1 \xrightarrow{\text{Yb(OTf)}_3(15 \text{ mol}\%), \text{NBS}()}{MeOH 25^\circ C}$	(1.5 equiv)	N $$ R^1 +		
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	4			8	9	
Entry	Substrate	\mathbb{R}^1	<i>t</i> (h)	Х	dr ^a (8:9)	Yield ^b (%)
1	4a	C_6H_5	7	Br	65:35	52
2	4 a	C_6H_5	8	Ι	67:33	87
3	4b	$4-MeOC_6H_4$	3	Br	78:22	98
4	4c	$4-BnOC_6H_4$	4	Br	75:25	91
5	4 d	3, 4-MeOC ₆ H ₃	2	Ι	79:21	97
6	4 e	4-BnO-3-MeOC ₆ H ₃	2	Ι	75:25	90
7	4h	2-Naphthyl	9	Br	63:37	90
8	4i	$2-ClC_6H_4$	48	Cl/Br/I	1	NR
9	4j	$2-NO_2C_6H_4$	48	Cl/Br/I	1	NR
10	4k	CH ₃	24	Br	66:34	71 (10)
11	41	$C_{6}H_{13}$	24	Br	62:38	78 (8)

Yields in parentheses refer to the dibromocarbonyl compounds. NR: No reaction.

^a Determined from the ¹H NMR spectrum of the crude reaction mixture.

^b Combined isolated yields of pure 8 and 9 after column chromatography.

catalyzed asymmetric halohydrination, therefore, was further applied to the catalytic asymmetric halomethoxylation of different (2R)-N-enoylbornanesultam substrates 4 (Table 3). It was found that when a methanolic solution of substrate 4a was treated with NBS (1.5 equiv) in the presence of the Yb(OTf)₃ catalyst (15 mol %) at rt, it gave the desired bromomethoxycarbonyl compounds in 52% yield (entry 1). The iodomethoxylation of 4a under the same reaction conditions using NIS instead of NBS provided the iodomethoxycarbonyl compounds in 87% yield with moderate diastereoselectivity (entry 2). The stereochemistry of the major isomer 8a was assigned by analogy with the above halohydroxylation reactions. The compound 8a could easily be transformed into the N-protected syn-\beta-methoxyphenylalanine, the unusual amino acid component of cyclomarins.^{14,6a} The electron-rich cinnamoyl substrates 4b, 4c and the β -(2-naphthyl)enoyl substrate 4h responded to the bromomethoxylation with moderate to good diastereoselectivities (entries 3, 4 and 7) and the more electron-rich cinnamoyl substrates 4d and 4e preferred to undergo iodomethoxylation with NIS (entries 5 and 6). Similar to the halohydroxylation, the electron-deficient cinnamoyl substrates 4i and 4j did not undergo any halomethoxylation even under more vigorous reaction conditions. We also studied the halomethoxylation of alkenoyl substrates 4k and 4l under the same reaction conditions, which showed 100% regioselectivity, with moderate diastereoselectivity, in good yields.

In summary, we have developed a Lewis acid catalyzed asymmetric halohydrination, (halohydroxylation as well as halomethoxylation) of chiral α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compounds with NXS (X = Br, I) as the halogen source. Regio- and anti-selectivity of 100% and moderate to good diastereoselectivity with good yields was observed when bornanesultam was used as the chiral auxiliary. Most of the metal halides and acetates did not catalyze the halohydrin reactions, but metal triflates showed good catalytic activity for the halohydrination of α,β -unsaturated carbonyl compounds. Among the metal triflates, Yb(OTf)₃ was found to be the best catalyst. Alkenoyl, cinnamoyl and moderately electron-rich cinnamoyl substrates smoothly underwent the Yb(OTf)₃ catalyzed bromohydrin reactions with NBS whilst the more electron-rich cinnamoyl substrates preferred to undergo iodohydrin reactions with NIS. The cinnamoyl substrates possessing electron-withdrawing substituents on the aromatic ring did not respond to the Lewis acid catalyzed halohydrin reaction with either NCS, NBS or NIS. This methodology offers an alternative method for the synthesis of chiral α -halo- β -hydroxy/methoxy carboxylic acid derivatives using easily available N-halosuccinimide as the halogen source. A better understanding of Lewis acid catalyzed halohydrin reactions may provide a catalytic and enantioselective method for the halohydrination of olefins. We are currently attempting to improve the diastereoselectivity of this process and we are applying this concept to other catalytic 1,2-halo functionalizations of olefins.

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- 9. Pure compounds **2a** and **2a'** were fully characterized and their stereochemistry was assigned in our earlier report.^{6b}
- 10. The dr of 3a/3a' was also the same as for the halohydrins. It was determined by ¹³C NMR spectral analysis because no separated ¹H NMR signal was found for the diastereomers of dibromocarbonyl compound 3a/3a' in the ¹H NMR spectrum in CDCl₃.
- 11. Representative spectral data of **2b**: ¹H NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.35 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 2H), 6.90 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 5.88 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 5.13 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 4.49–4.45 (m, 1H), 4.28–4.23 (m, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 2.71–2.25 (m, 2H), 0.93 (d, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H), 0.92 (d, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H);¹³C NMR (50 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.9, 159.6, 153.0, 131.3, 128.4, 113.7, 74.2, 63.5, 58.3, 55.1, 45.1, 28.0, 17.6, 14.7. **2b**': ¹H NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.36 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 6.90 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 6.00 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 5.10 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 4.52–4.39 (m, 1H), 4.26–4.17 (m, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 2.45–2.20 (m, 1H), 0.89 (d,

J = 6.9 Hz, 3H), 0.71 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (50 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.2, 159.6, 153.1, 131.3, 128.1, 113.8, 75.0, 63.4, 58.9, 55.1, 44.6, 28.2, 17.7, 14.3.

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- 13. Diastereomers of halohydrins 5 and 6 were isolated in pure form and fully characterized by ¹H and ¹³C NMR and elemental (CHN) analysis. Representative spectral data for **5b**: ¹H NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.35 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 2H), 6.90 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 2H), 5.11 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 5.05–4.92 (br d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 4.05–3.88 (m, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.50 (d, J = 4.6 Hz, 2H), 2.28–2.00 (m, 3H) 2.00–1.25 (m, 4H), 1.17 (s, 3H), 0.91 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (50 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 167.7, 159.6, 130.9, 128.2, 113.7, 74.5, 64.7, 55.0, 52.7, 48.6, 47.7, 46.5, 44.3, 37.4, 32.5, 26.2, 20.5, 19.7. Anal. Calcd for C₂₀H₂₆BrNO₅S: C, 50.85; H, 5.55; N, 2.97%. Found: C, 51.18; H, 5.61; N, 2.66%. 6b: ¹H NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.32 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 6.88 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 5.07 (quasi q, J = 2.8 Hz, 2H), 3.82 (m, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 3.45 (s, 2H), 2.20-1.75 (m, 5H), 1.75-1.10 (m, 3H), 0.91 (s, 3H), 0.77 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (50 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 167.2, 159.6, 130.9, 127.7, 113.7, 75.9,

65.2, 55.1, 52.6, 48.3, 47.5, 46.3, 44.4, 37.7, 32.6, 26.1, 20.1, 19.6. Anal. Calcd for $C_{20}H_{26}BrNO_5S$: C, 50.85; H, 5.55; N, 2.97%. Found: C, 51.14; H, 5.20; N, 2.83%.

- 14. The minor isomer **6f**, from the iodohydroxylation of **4f**, could not be obtained in pure form due to its instability during silica gel column chromatography.
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