Tetrahedron Letters 52 (2011) 6974–6977

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Tetrahedron Letters

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tetlet

Donor cyclopropanes in synthesis: utilising silylmethylcyclopropanes to prepare 2,5-disubstituted tetrahydrofurans

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 12 August 2011
Revised 30 September 2011
Accepted 17 October 2011
Available online 20 October 2011

Keywords:
Silylmethylcyclopropane
Donor cyclopropane
2,5-Disubstituted tetrahydrofuran

ABSTRACT

The use of donor-only silylmethylcyclopropanes in the Lewis acid promoted reaction with aldehydes to generate 2,5-disubstituted tetrahydrofurans is described. The diastereoselectivity obtained in the product is very dependent upon the temperature of the reaction.

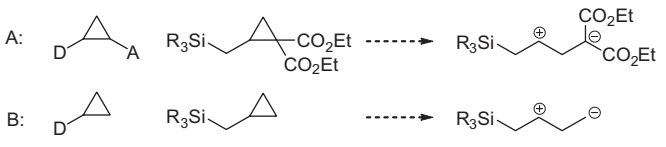
The use of donor–acceptor (D–A) cyclopropanes in synthesis is well documented,[1,2] and more recently, acceptor-cyclopropanes have also been utilised in a number of transformations.[2] Herein, we report one of the first applications of donor cyclopropanes—silylmethylcyclopropanes—in the synthesis of substituted tetrahydrofurans.

The use of silylmethylcyclopropanes as part of D–A cyclopropanes has been widely reported, where the silicon group aids stabilisation of a β-carbocation, via the β-effect, while an anion stabilising group—most frequently a carbonyl or dicarbonyl function—is used to stabilise a carbanion (Scheme 1A).[3–7] Recent studies have suggested that the role of this group, frequently malonate, may be more subtle, including complexation of the Lewis acid between the 1,3-dicarbonyl groups.[8] However, very little has been reported on the use of donor-only cyclopropanes (Scheme 1B), where there is no anion stabilising group.[9] As part of our ongoing interest in the use of silyl groups to stabilise cationic intermediates,[10–12] herein we report the use of acceptor-free silylmethylcyclopropanes in [3+2] cycloaddition reactions.

Attempts to form the prerequisite silylmethylcyclopropanes by reaction of cyclopropylmagnesium bromide with either chloro- or iodomethylsilanes were unsuccessful, as was the 'reverse' reaction of a Grignard reagent derived from a chloromethylsilane with bromocyclopropane. It should be noted that a very recent publication suggests that this transformation is possible when using an organolithium species.[13] In our approach, however, a wide variety of allylsilanes could be prepared from allylmagnesium bromide with a chlorosilane. These then readily underwent Simmons–Smith or related reactions to give the desired silylmethylcyclopropanes (Table 1).

The cyclopropanes were then employed in [3+2] cycloaddition reactions. There has only been one previous report attempting these, with no published experimental details.[9] Therefore, it was considered important to define the scope of the reaction, both in terms of reaction partner for the donor and also optimising the reaction conditions. A range of aromatic and aliphatic aldehydes were reacted with each of the silylmethylcyclopropanes prepared, in the presence of a Lewis acid (either $TiCl_4$, $SnCl_4$, $BF_3{\cdot}OEt_2$ or $InCl_3$) at either −78 °C, room temperature or reflux, but all failed to give any tetrahydrofuran product. One feature of these reactions was that the silylmethylcyclopropane was never recovered, but often a mixture of the chlorosilane **1**, the hydroxysilane **2** or the disiloxane **3** were obtained. When using tin tetrachloride as the Lewis acid, the homoallylstannane **4**[14] was often obtained in high yields if an aqueous work-up was avoided (Scheme 2).

To improve the likelihood that the silylmethylcyclopropane would react with the aldehyde rather than the Lewis acid, more reactive aldehydes—glyoxals—were investigated. Again, initial trials employing phenyl glyoxal with phenyldimethylsilylmethylcyclopropane failed to give any tetrahydrofuran. However, Yadav[3]



Scheme 1. (A) Donor–acceptor and (B) donor-cyclopropanes.

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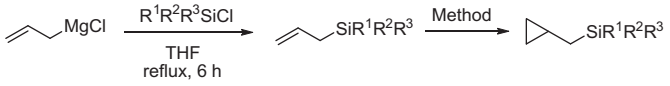
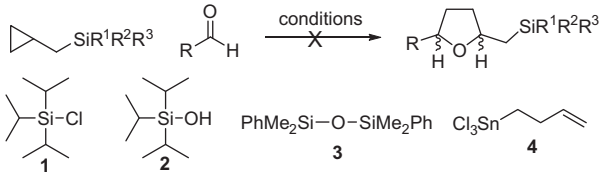
doi:10.1016/j.tetlet.2011.10.091

Table 1
Preparation of silylmethylcyclopropanes



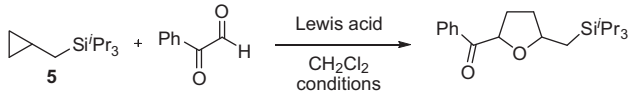
R^1	R^2	R^3	% Yield allylsilane	Cyclopropanation method[a]	% Yield
Et	Et	Et	90	Simmons–Smith	42
^{n}Bu	^{n}Bu	^{n}Bu	88	Simmons–Smith	65
^{i}Pr	^{i}Pr	^{i}Pr	81	Simmons–Smith	77
				Yamamoto	56
Me	Ph	Ph	59	Simmons–Smith	71
^{t}Bu	Ph	Ph	92	Simmons–Smith	86
Me	Me	Ph	86	Simmons–Smith	82
				Furukawa	61
				Yamamoto	63

[a] Simmons–Smith: copper chloride (5 equiv)/Zn powder (5 equiv), CH_2I_2 (2 equiv), Et_2O, reflux, 24 h; Yamamoto: $AlMe_3$ (2 equiv), CH_2I_2 (2 equiv), CH_2Cl_2, r.t., 2 h; Furukawa: $ZnEt_2$ (5 equiv), CH_2I_2 (5 equiv), CH_2Cl_2, r.t., 6 h.



Scheme 2. Attempted [3+2] cycloadditions to give 2,5-disubstituted tetrahydrofurans.

Table 2
Lewis acid screening for the reaction of phenyl glyoxal with triisopropylsilylmethylcyclopropane



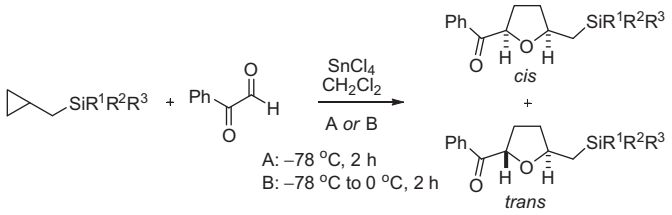
Lewis acid	Conditions[a]	% Yield THF	% Recovered **5**
$SnCl_4$	−78 °C, 3 h	81	0
$SnBr_4$	−78 °C, 5 h	37	42
$AlCl_3$	−78 °C, 4 h	9	20
$TiCl_4$	−78 °C, 3 h	1	11
$ZnBr_2$	Reflux 48 h	15	0
	0 °C—reflux, 6 d, DCE	12	14
$ZnBr_2$ (2 equiv)	Reflux 96 h	63	0
$ZnCl_2$	0 °C—Reflux, 6 d	31	24
	0 °C—Reflux, 6 d, DCE	34	47
ZnI_2	0 °C—Reflux, 6 d, DCE	2	6

[a] All reactions performed in the ratio cyclopropane (1 equiv):Lewis acid (1.1 equiv):aldehyde (1.5 equiv).

has proposed that the best method to prevent nucleophilic attack at silicon during reactions is to incorporate bulky substituents on the silicon, the *tert*-butyldiphenylsilyl group in their case. Reaction of *tert*-butyldiphenylsilylmethylcyclopropane with freshly distilled phenyl glyoxal and tin tetrachloride in dichloromethane at −78 °C gave a moderate 31% yield of a 2,5-disubstituted tetrahydrofuran. This was our starting point for optimisation studies. It was found that the similarly bulky triisopropylsilyl group could also be successfully employed in the cycloaddition reaction, and the products were easier to purify by chromatography. First, a range of Lewis acids was screened for the reaction of triisopropylsilylmethylcyclopropane (**5**) with phenyl glyoxal (Table 2).

Optimum conditions were found to be combining the $SnCl_4$ and phenyl glyoxal in CH_2Cl_2 at −78 °C, followed by dropwise addition of the cyclopropane via syringe pump at 24 ml/h; rapid addition

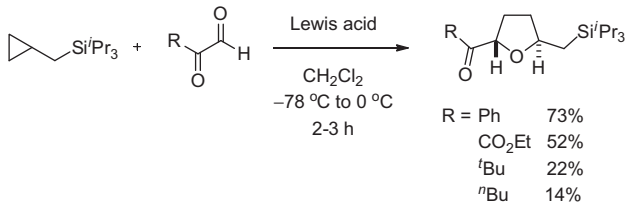
Table 3
Effect of the size of the silyl substituents and temperature on product distribution



R^1	R^2	R^3	Conditions[a]	% Yield	Ratio *cis*:*trans*
^{i}Pr	^{i}Pr	^{i}Pr	A	81	2:1
			B	85[b]	*trans*
Me	Me	Ph	A	53	2:1
			B	71[b]	*trans*
Me	Ph	Ph	A	50	2:1
			B	48	1:3
^{t}Bu	Ph	Ph	A	66	2:1
			B	72	1:1
^{n}Bu	^{n}Bu	^{n}Bu	A	43	1:1
			B	26	1:5
Et	Et	Et	A	21	2:1
			B	53	1:10

[a] All reactions performed in the ratio cyclopropane (1 equiv):Lewis acid (1.1 equiv):aldehyde (1.5 equiv). Conditions A: −78 °C, 2 h; Conditions B: −78 °C–0 °C, 2–3 h.

[b] Reaction performed in the ratio cyclopropane (1 equiv):Lewis acid (0.7 equiv):aldehyde (1.5 equiv).

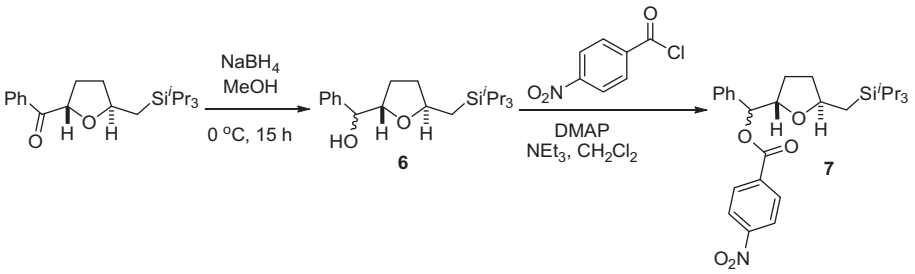


Scheme 3. Preparation of silylmethylcyclopropanes.

led to homoallylstannane formation. It was also found that the more dilute the reaction, the higher the yield of THF, with 0.06 M (with respect to the cyclopropane) being optimal. Many Lewis acids were re-screened, and it was found that both tin and zinc halides were efficient at promoting the reaction but that most other Lewis acids were very poor at promotion. The effect of temperature on the reaction was intriguing. During the optimisation reactions, when the reaction was run at temperatures below 0 °C, two compounds were always obtained which were inseparable by column chromatography. The compounds had the same molecular mass (but slightly different retention times by GCMS), R_f values and similar NMR signals, that is, the same number of carbon environments and a duplication of proton signals. The compounds were assigned as diastereoisomers of the THF arising from the *cis*/*trans* relative stereochemical substitution patterns across the oxygen in the ring. It was found that performing the reaction at 0 °C gave the *trans* stereoisomer exclusively, and this could be isolated and characterised. However, when the reaction was performed at −78 °C and also quenched at −78 °C, a mixture of diastereomers was obtained, but with the *cis*-isomer being the major (but never exclusive) one. Assignments of stereochemistry were initially based upon NOE observations.

Therefore we returned to investigate the combination of the effect of the size of the silyl group together with the observed temperature effect (Table 3).

Many other aldehydes were reacted employing the optimised reaction conditions, mostly with those bearing electron-withdraw-



Scheme 4. Reduction of the α-carbonyl group and subsequent esterification.

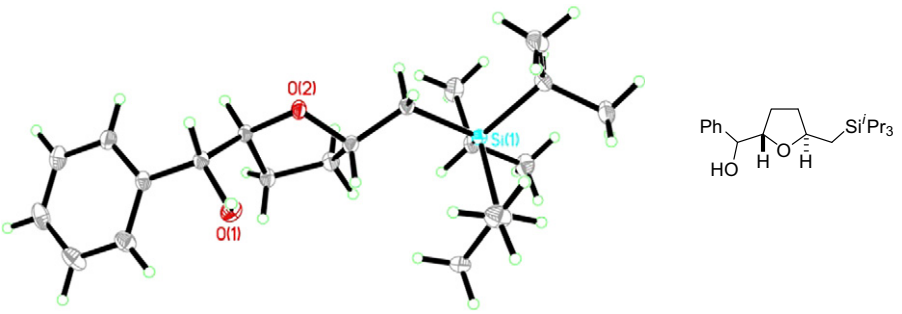


Figure 1. ORTEP X-ray crystallographic structure of phenyl-{(±)-5-[(triisopropylsilyl)methyl]tetrahydrofuran-2-yl}methanol **6**.

ing groups in an attempt to increase the reactivity of the aldehyde. Unfortunately, these were unsuccessful, and tetrahydrofurans were only obtained when various glyoxals were the reaction partner (Scheme 3).

Finally, it was possible to reduce the carbonyl function in the product THFs to the alcohol using sodium borohydride in methanol at room temperature. Starting with a single *trans* THF gave the reduced product **6** as a 2.6:1 mixture of diastereoisomers, presumably through a low level of chelation control: sodium borohydride is known to be a weak chelator.[15] The alcohol was converted into its *p*-nitrobenzoate derivative **7** (72%) in an attempt to crystallise it (Scheme 4). The crystallisation was unsuccessful. However, on prolonged storage, the alcohol was found to crystallise and demonstrated the *trans*-relationship of substituents across the oxygen atom of the ring (Fig. 1).

In summary, we have reported preliminary results and optimisation studies for the reaction of donor silylmethylcyclopropanes with aldehydes in the presence of a Lewis acid. [16] The temperature controlled outcome of the reaction offers scope for obtaining either the *cis*- or *trans*-THF products and the relative stereochemistry of the products was proven by NOE measurements and X-ray crystallography. [16] The latent functionality incorporated into the product THFs offers considerable scope for these compounds to be useful scaffolds for further functionalisation. This is currently under investigation and will be reported in due course.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following: EPSRC (studentship to J.D.) and the EPSRC National Mass Spectrometry Service, Swansea, UK for running all high resolution mass spectra.

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16. *Representative procedure: preparation of trans-(±)-(phenyl-(2-((triisopropylsilyl)methyl)tetrahydrofuran-5-yl)methanone:* To a stirred solution of freshly distilled phenyl glyoxal (0.12 g, 0.90 mmol) in anhydrous CH_2Cl_2 (2 mL) at −78 °C and under an atmosphere of argon was added, dropwise, a solution of $SnCl_4$ (0.17 g, 0.08 mL, 0.66 mmol) in anhydrous CH_2Cl_2 (2 mL). The resulting mixture was stirred at −78 °C for 5 min followed by the dropwise addition of a solution of (cyclopropylmethyl)triisopropylsilane (0.13 g, 0.6 mmol) in anhydrous CH_2Cl_2 (3 mL). The reaction was stirred at −78 °C and monitored by TLC, after 1 h the reaction was allowed to warm to 0 °C and stirred at 0 °C for 1 h. The reaction was quenched by the addition of H_2O (10 mL), the organic layer was separated and the aqueous layer further extracted with CH_2Cl_2 (3 × 10 mL). The combined organic phase was washed with brine (10 mL), separated, dried ($MgSO_4$), filtered and concentrated in vacuo to give the impure product (0.25 g) as a yellow oil. Purification by flash column chromatography [silica gel, gradient elution 100% hexane—20% Et_2O:hexane] afforded the desired product as the *trans* diastereoisomer (0.15 g, 73%) as a colourless oil; R_f 0.63 [20% Et_2O:hexane]; ν_{max}(film)/cm^{-1} 2947 (C–H), 1690 (C=O), 1430 (C–H), 1230 (Si–C), 1115 (C–O), 885; *trans*-diastereoisomer: δ_H (400 MHz; $CDCl_3$) 0.96 (1H, dd, *J* 14.4 and 7.5, $SiCH_aH_b$), 1.02–1.04 (21H, m, overlapping signals 3 × CH and 6 × CH_3), 1.20 (1H, dd, *J* 14.4 and 6.6, $SiCH_aH_b$), 1.53-1.64 (1H, m, C-3 THF), 2.09–2.23 (2H, m, overlapping signals C-3 and C-4 THF), 2.27–2.37 (1H, m, C-4 THF), 4.23–4.30 (1H, m, C-2 THF), 5.31 (1H, dd, *J* 8.3 and 6.1, C-5 THF), 7.45 (2H, app t, *J* 7.7, 2 × *m*-CH Ph), 7.55 (1H, app tt, *J* 7.4 and 1.4, *p*-CH Ph), 7.99 (2H, dd, *J* 8.3 and 1.4, 2 × *o*-CH Ph); δ_C (100.6 MHz; $CDCl_3$) 11.4 (3 × CH, ^{i}Pr), 16.9 ($SiCH_2$), 19.0 (6 × CH_3, ^{i}Pr), 29.3 (C-4 THF), 35.1 (C-3 THF), 78.7 (CH C-2 THF), 79.3 (CH C-5 THF), 128.6 (2 × *m*-CH, Ph), 129.0 (2 × *o*-CH, Ph), 133.2 (*p*-CH, Ph), 135.4 (C, Ph), 199.5 (C=O); LRMS (EI$^+$, *m*/*z*): M$^+$ not visible, 303 ([M−^{i}Pr]$^+$, 14%), 261 (100), 241 (7), 157 (22), 105 (30), 77 (22); HRMS (CI$^+$, *m*/*z*) 347.2405 [M+H]$^+$, $C_{21}H_{35}O_2Si$ requires 347.2401.
(±)-Phenyl(2-((triisopropylsilyl)methyl)tetrahydrofuran-5-yl)methanol: To a stirred solution of phenyl(2-((triisopropylsilyl)methyl)tetrahydrofuran-5-yl)methanone (0.40 g, 1.16 mmol) in HPLC grade MeOH (7.0 mL) at 0 °C was added in one portion $NaBH_4$ (0.11 g, 2.90 mmol). The mixture was stirred at 0 °C until effervescence had ceased and then warmed to room temperature and stirred for a further 15 h. The reaction was quenched by the addition of AcOH (0.1 mL), concentrated to approximately one quarter of the volume under reduced pressure and partitioned between CH_2Cl_2 (10 mL) and H_2O (10 mL). The organic phase was separated and the aqueous phase extracted with CH_2Cl_2 (3 × 10 mL). The combined organic layer was washed with brine (10 mL), dried ($MgSO_4$), filtered and concentrated in vacuo to give the impure product (0.33 g)

as a cloudy colourless oil. Purification by flash column chromatography [silica gel, gradient elution 100% hexane—20% Et_2O:hexane] afforded the title compound as an inseparable mixture of the two diastereoisomers (combined yield 0.31 g, 0.89 mmol, 77%, dr 2.6:1) as a colourless oil; R_f 0.29 [20% Et_2O:hexane]; ν_{max}(film)/cm^{-1} 3426 (O–H), 2940, 2864, 1462, 1195, 1027, 881; major diastereoisomer: δ_H (400 MHz; $CDCl_3$) 0.94 (1H, dd, *J* 14.5 and 6.8, Si*H*$_a$H$_b$), 1.03–1.12 (21H, m, overlapping signals $^iPr_3$Si), 1.12 (1H, dd, *J* 14.5 and 7.4, SiCH$_a$*H*$_b$), 1.42–1.79 (3H, m, C-3 and C-4 THF), 2.03–2.15 (1H, m, C-4 THF), 3.06 (1H, d, *J* 1.6, OH), 4.08 (1H, q, *J* 7.4, C-5 THF), 4.19–4.29 (1H, m, overlapping signals C-2 THF), 4.42 (1H, dd, *J* 7.9 and 1.6, *H*COH), 7.24–7.39 (5H, m, Ph); δ_C (100.6 MHz; $CDCl_3$) 11.5 (3 × CH Si^{i}Pr$_3$), 17.7 (CH_2 ^{i}Pr$_3$SiCH$_2$), 19.0 (6 × CH_3 Si^{i}Pr$_3$), 28.8 (CH_2, C-4 THF), 36.1 (CH_2, C-3 THF), 77.5 (COH), 77.6 (CH, C-2 THF), 83.0 (CH, C-5 THF), 127.2 (2 × *o*-CH, Ph), 128.0 (*p*-CH, Ph), 128.4 (2 × *m*-CH, Ph), 140.4 (C, Ph); minor diastereoisomer: δ_H (400 MHz; $CDCl_3$) 0.92 (1H, dd, *J* 14.4 and 7.9, Si*H*$_a$H$_b$), 1.03–1.12 (22H, m, overlapping signals $^iPr_3$SiCH$_a$*H*$_b$), 1.42–179 (2H, m, overlapping signals C-3 and C-4 THF), 1.89 (1H, dddd, *J* 12.2, 10.8, 9.1 and 7.6, C-3 THF), 2.03–2.15 (1H, m, C-4 THF), 2.59 (1H, d, *J* 2.5, OH), 4.19–4.29 (2H, m, overlapping signals C-5 and C-2 THF), 4.91 (1H, dd appearing as br t, *J* 2.5, *H*COH), 7.24–7.39 (5H, m, Ph); δ_C (100.6 MHz; $CDCl_3$) 11.4 (3 × CH Si^{i}Pr$_3$), 17.1 (CH_2, ^{i}Pr$_3$SiCH$_2$), 19.0 (6 × CH_3 Si^{i}Pr$_3$), 26.0 (CH_2 C-4 THF), 35.7 (CH_2 C-3 THF), 74.3 (COH), 78.7 (CH C-2 THF), 82.2 (CH C-5 THF), 126.1 (2 × *o*-CH, Ph), 127.4 (*p*-CH, Ph), 128.3 (2 × *m*-CH, Ph), 140.5 (C, Ph); LRMS (EI$^+$, *m*/*z*): M^+ not visible, 305 ([M−^{i}Pr]$^+$, 9%), 287 (3), 263 (6), 241 (24), 157 (100), 131 (68), 103 (86), 75 (50); HRMS (ESP, *m*/*z*) 366.2822 [M+NH_4]$^+$, $C_{21}H_{40}O_2NSi$ requires 366.2823. Diastereoselectivity calculated by analysis of the ^{1}H NMR integrals for the *H*COH proton at 4.42 (major diastereoisomer) and 4.91 ppm (minor diastereoisomer). Crystal data. $C_{21}H_{36}O_2Si$ = 348.59; Monoclinic; space group C 1 2/c 1; *a* = 30.9404(12), *b* = 7.5968(3), *c* = 21.0505(8) Å; volume 4106.4(3) Å^3; *T* = 100 (2) K; Z 8; 24305 reflections measured, 6227 unique [*R*(int) = 0.0183]. The final *R* values: R1 = 0.0329, wR2 = 0.0883 (observed) and R1 = 0.0379, wR2 = 0.0920 (all). CCDC 843974.