Asymmetric Catalysis

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# Dirhodium Carboxylates Catalyzed Enantioselective Coupling Reactions of α-Diazophosphonates, Anilines, and Electron-Deficient Aldehydes**

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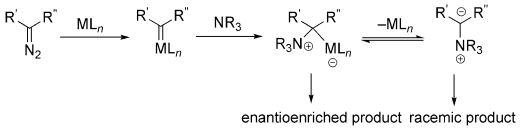
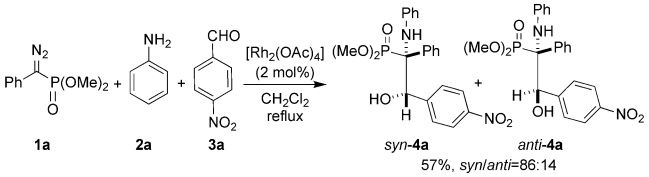
Ammonium ylides are versatile intermediates that are frequently used in the synthesis of complex and diverse nitrogen-containing compounds.[1,2] Transition-metal complexes, including dirhodium(II,II) carboxylates, copper(II) acetylacetonate, and ruthenium(II) porphyrins, are effective catalysts for the generation of ammonium ylides through decomposition of diazo compounds in the presence of amines.[2] While highly enantioselective alkene cyclopropanation,[2,3] carbene X–H (X = C, Si, N, O) insertion,[4–8] and transformation reactions of oxygen ylides[9,10] and sulfur ylides[11] have been achieved by decomposition of diazo compounds in the presence of chiral transition-metal complexes, transition-metal-catalyzed asymmetric reactions of ammonium ylides are rare. The major challenge in developing highly enantioselective metal-catalyzed ammonium ylide reactions is the equilibrium between the metal-bound/stabilized ylide (referred to as metal-bound ylide) and the free ylide; the latter leads to the formation of racemic product (Scheme 1).

In this study, we examined the three-component coupling reaction of α-diazophosphonates, anilines, and electron-deficient aldehydes to give α-amino-β-hydroxyphosphonate compounds (Scheme 2).[12] α-Amino phosphonic acid compounds are key substrates used in the synthesis of phosphonopeptides and could act as enzyme inhibitors, antibiotics, plant growth regulators, and haptens of catalytic antibodies.[13]



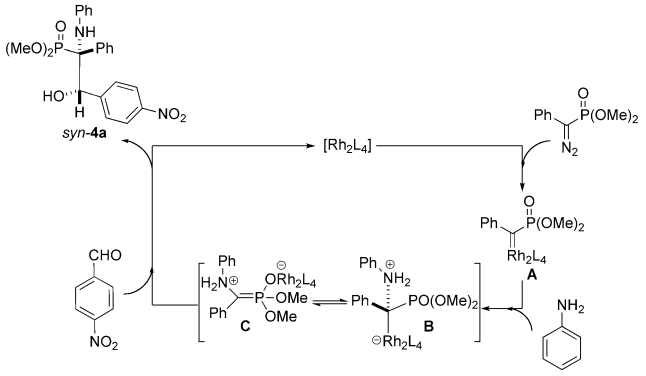

***Scheme 1.*** Ammonium ylide formation by the reaction of metal carbenoid with amine. L = ligand, M = metal.




***Scheme 2.*** Three-component coupling reaction to *syn*-**4a** and *anti*-**4a**.

At the outset, the reaction of dimethyl α-diazo(benzyl) phosphonate **1a**, aniline **2a**, 4-nitrobenzaldehyde **3a**, and [$Rh_2(OAc)_4$] catalyst (2 mol%) in $CH_2Cl_2$ at 40 °C for 15 hours afforded the two diastereomers *syn*-**4a** and *anti*-**4a** in 57% overall yield and with a *syn*/*anti* ratio of 86:14 (Scheme 2). The structure of the major isomer *syn*-**4a** was determined by X-ray crystallography (see the Supporting Information).

A proposed mechanism for this Rh-catalyzed three-component reaction is shown in Scheme 3. With reference to previous work on Brønsted acid/[$Rh_2(OAc)_4$]-catalyzed coupling reaction of diazoester, carbamate, and imine,[14c] the rhodium catalyst decomposes α-diazophosphonate to generate Rh–carbene species **A**, which is trapped by aniline to give




***Scheme 3.*** Proposed mechanism for the three-component coupling reaction.

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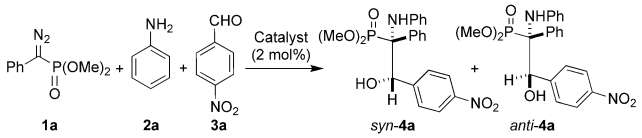
metal-bound ammonium ylide intermediate **B**/**C**. Subsequent nucleophilic addition of the intermediate to the aldehyde gives the $\alpha$-amino-$\beta$-hydroxyphosphonate.

To examine the significance of metal-bound ylide intermediate **B**/**C** in the reaction, we performed DFT calculations using B3LYP functionals to examine the addition of ylide intermediate **B**/**C** to the aldehyde in the three-component reaction of **1a**, **2a**, and **3a** catalyzed by $[Rh_2(O_2CH)_4]$. The computed free-energy surface is shown in Scheme 4. The formation of **C** from **B** is endergonic by 12.8 kcal mol$^{-1}$, but the subsequent nucleophilic addition of **C** to the aldehyde via **D** is relatively facile, requiring an activation free energy of 3.7 kcal mol$^{-1}$. In contrast, the pathway via the free ylide has an overall activation free energy of 20.8 kcal mol$^{-1}$ via $TS_{F-G}$, which is 4.7 kcal mol$^{-1}$ higher than that for the pathway via **C** (16.1 kcal mol$^{-1}$). Our effort to locate the transition state of the direct addition of **B** to the aldehyde was unsuccessful. These results show that addition of metal-bound intermediate **C** to the aldehyde is the reaction pathway with the lowest energy. We anticipated that chirality transfer would occur in this pathway via the metal-bound ylide if a chiral dirhodium(II,II) catalyst was used.

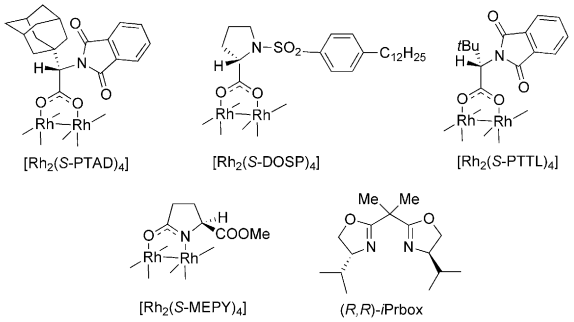
To validate our hypothesis, a series of chiral dirhodium(II,II) carboxylates and the Cu$^{I}$ complex of (*R*,*R*)-*i*Prbox, which have been reported to give excellent enantioselectivity in alkene cyclopropanation and carbene C–H insertion reactions, were examined for the three-component coupling reaction of **1a**, **2a**, and **3a** (Table 1). With $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$[15] as catalyst, **4a** was obtained in 73% yield with a *syn*/*anti* ratio of 80:20 and an *ee* value of 77% (Table 1, entry 1). $[Rh_2(S\text{-DOSP})_4]$[16] and $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTTL})_4]$[17] gave *syn*-**4a** with 22% and 68% *ee*, respectively (Table 1, entries 2 and 3). $[Rh_2(S\text{-MEPY})_4]$[18] failed to catalyze this reaction (Table 1, entry 4). When CuOTf/(*R*,*R*)-*i*Prbox was used, both product yield and enantioselectivity were low (Table 1, entry 5). With $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$ as catalyst, $CH_2Cl_2$ was the best solvent (Table 1, entries 1, 6, and 7). Lowering the reaction temperature to room temperature resulted in a long reaction time (40 h) and lower product yield and enantioselectivity (Table 1, entry 8). Increasing the reaction temperature to 85 °C led to reduction of both the product yield and enantioselectivity (Table 1, entry 9).

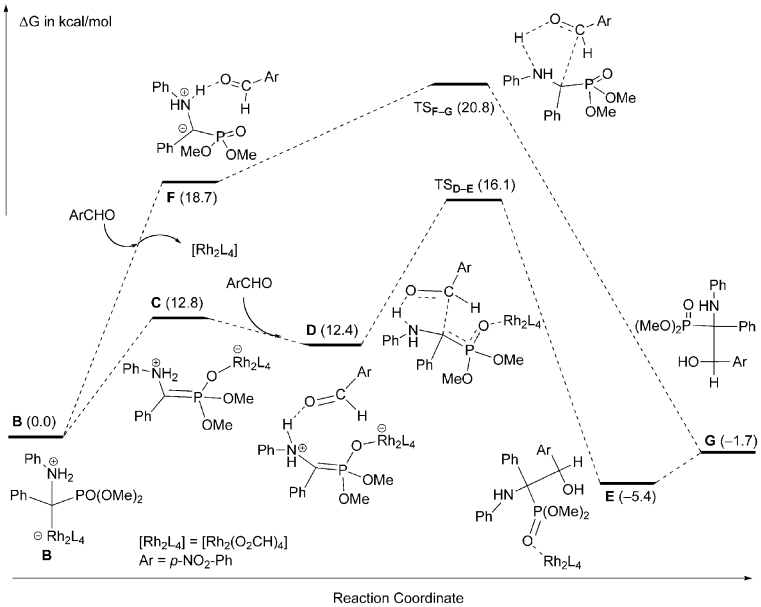
***Table 1:*** Catalyst screening and optimization of the coupling reaction of **1a**, **2a**, and **3a**.[a]




| Entry | Catalyst | Solvent | *T* [°C] | Yield[b] [%] | *syn*/*anti*[c] | *ee* (*syn*) [%][d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$ | $CH_2Cl_2$ | 40 | 73 | 80:20 | 77 |
| 2 | $[Rh_2(S\text{-DOSP})_4]$ | $CH_2Cl_2$ | 40 | 54 | 84:16 | 22 |
| 3 | $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTTL})_4]$ | $CH_2Cl_2$ | 40 | 65 | 81:19 | 68 |
| 4 | $[Rh_2(S\text{-MEPY})_4]$ | $CH_2Cl_2$ | 40 | n.r. | – | – |
| 5 | CuOTf/ (*R*,*R*)-*i*Pr-box | $CH_2Cl_2$ | 40 | 32 | 90:10 | 9 |
| 6 | $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$ | toluene | 40 | 35 | 62:38 | 27 |
| 7 | $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$ | DMB | 40 | n.r. | – | – |
| 8[e] | $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$ | $CH_2Cl_2$ | 25 | 54 | 85:15 | 64 |
| 9 | $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$ | $(CH_2Cl)_2$ | 85 | 30 | 66:34 | 42 |

[a] **1a**:**2a**:**3a**:catalyst = 1:1.5:3:0.02, reaction time = 12–15 h. [b] Yields of isolated products. [c] Ratio of *syn*/*anti* determined by $^1$H NMR spectroscopy. [d] Determined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. [e] Reaction time was 40 h. DMB = 2,2-dimethylbutane; n.r. = no reaction; OTf = trifluoromethanesulfonate.



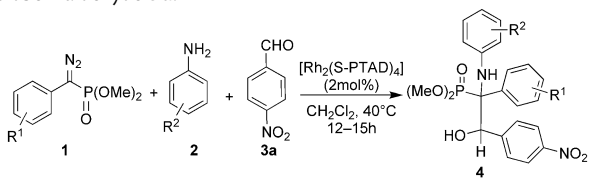

***Scheme 4.*** Computed free-energy surface for the coupling reaction.

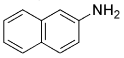
The scope of $[Rh_2(S\text{-PTAD})_4]$-catalyzed three-component coupling reactions of derivatives **1** of dimethyl $\alpha$-diazo(benzyl)phosphonate, anilines **2**, and 4-nitrobenzaldehyde **3a** was examined with the optimized conditions (Table 2). Bulky *ortho* substituent(s) on aniline significantly improved the enantioselectivity up to 98% and diastereoselectivity up to 90:10 (Table 2, entries 1–5). Substitution at the *meta* position has a slight impact on both the enantioselectivity and diastereoselectivity (Table 2, entries 6–7). When 4-chloroaniline **2i** was used, product **4i** was obtained in 91% *ee* (Table 2, entry 8).

The effect of substitution on the benzyl group of diazo compound **1** was examined by using 2-

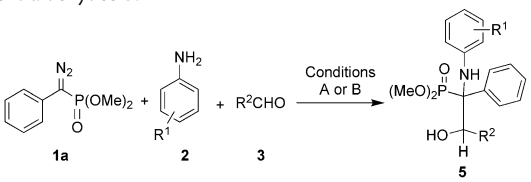
***Table 2:*** Scope of enantioselective three-component coupling reaction of derivatives **1** of dimethyl $\alpha$-diazo(benzyl)phosphonate, anilines **2**, and 4-nitrobenzaldehyde **3a**.[a]

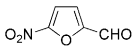
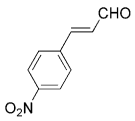



| Entry | **1** | $R^1$ | **2** | $R^2$ | **4**, Yield [%][b] | *syn*/*anti*[c] | *ee* (*syn*) [%][d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **1a** | H | **2b** | 2-Me | **4b**, 80 | 89:11 | 96 |
| 2 | **1a** | H | **2c** | 2-Br | **4c**, 85 | 90:10 | 98 |
| 3 | **1a** | H | **2d** | 2-Cl | **4d**, 81 | 83:17 | 89 |
| 4 | **1a** | H | **2e**: |  | **4e**, 82 | 89:11 | 94 |
| 5 | **1a** | H | **2f** | 2-Br, 4-Cl | **4f**, 86 | 86:14 | 95 |
| 6 | **1a** | H | **2g**: |  | **4g**, 69 | 78:22 | 74 |
| 7 | **1a** | H | **2h** | 3-Cl | **4h**, 75 | 81:19 | 73 |
| 8 | **1a** | H | **2i** | 4-Cl | **4i**, 78 | 90:10 | 91 |
| 9 | **1a** | H | **2j** | 3-OMe | **4j**, 56 | 76:24 | 60 |
| 10 | **1b** | 4-Cl | **2b** | 2-Me | **4k**, 78 | 84:16 | 89 |
| 11 | **1c** | 4-Me | **2b** | 2-Me | **4l**, 78 | 88:12 | 97 |
| 12 | **1d** | 4-OMe | **2b** | 2-Me | **4m**, 56 | 87:13 | 71 |
| 13 | **1b** | 4-Cl | **2e**: |  | **4n**, 80 | 87:13 | 94 |
| 14 | **1c** | 4-Me | **2k** | 2-F | **4o**, 83 | 82:18 | 79 |
| 15 | **1c** | 4-Me | **2l** | 2-Br, 4-F | **4p**, 82 | 80:20 | 93 |

[a] **1**:**2**:**3a**:catalyst = 1:1.5:3:0.02. [b] Yields of isolated products. [c] Determined by $^1$H NMR spectroscopy. [d] Determined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase.

***Table 3:*** Scope of enantioselective three-component coupling reaction of dimethyl $\alpha$-diazo(benzyl)phosphonate **1a**, anilines **2**, and electron-deficient aldehydes **3**.[a]




| Entry | **2** | **3** | $R^2$ | **5**, Yield [%][b] | *syn*/*anti*[c] | *ee* (*syn*) [%][d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1[e] | **2c** | **3b** | 4-$CO_2$Me | **5a**, 77 | 91:9 | 66 |
| 2[f] | | | | **5a**, 79 | 87:13 | 79 |
| 3[e] | **2c** | **3c** | 4-$NO_2$ | **5b**, 69[h] | 89:11 | 67 |
| 4[f] | | | | **5b**, 77 | 88:12 | 86 |
| 5[g] | **2c** | **3d**: |  | **5c**, 64 | 87:13 | 77 |
| 6[f] | | | | **5c**, 65 | 85:15 | 75 |
| 7[e] | **2c** | **3e**: |  | **5d**, 0 | | |
| 8[f] | | | | **5d**, 83[i] | 94:6 | 80 |
| 9[e] | **2b** | **3b** | 4-$CO_2$Me | **5e**, 69 | 90:10 | 61 |
| 10[f] | | | | **5e**, 75 | 88:12 | 79 |
| 11[e] | **2b** | **3c** | 4-$NO_2$ | **5f**, 71[j] | 85:15 | 75 |
| 12[f] | | | | **5f**, 74 | 83:17 | 79 |

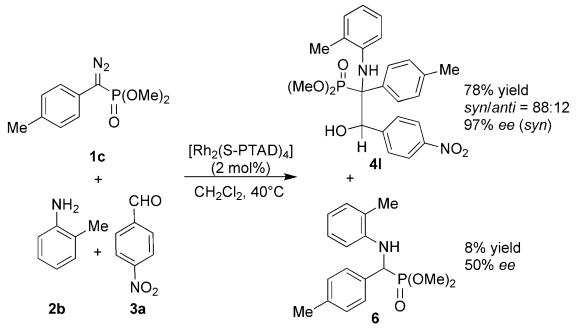
Conditions A: [$Rh_2$(S-PTAD)$_4$] (2 mol%), $CH_2Cl_2$, 40°C, 24 h. Conditions B: [$Rh_2$(S-PTTL)$_4$] (2 mol%), $CH_2Cl_2$, 40°C, 12–15 h. [a] **1a**:**2**:**3**:catalyst = 1:1.5:3:0.02. [b] Yields of isolated products. [c] Determined by $^1$H NMR spectroscopy. [d] Determined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. [e] Conditions A. [f] Conditions B. [g] Conditions A with reaction time of 15 h. [h] Yield of isolated product based on substrate conversion of 90%. [i] Yield of isolated product based on substrate conversion of 75%. [j] Yield of isolated product based on substrate conversion of 85%.

methylaniline **2b** or 4-aminoindane **2e** as substrate. Both Cl and Me substituents led to high *ee* values (89–97%, entries 10, 11, and 13). However, with the OMe substituent, the enantioselectivity decreased to 71% *ee* (Table 2, entry 12). The reaction of **1c**, **3a**, and 2-fluoroaniline **2k** (Table 2, entry 14) gave comparable enantioselectivity (79% *ee*) to that obtained for the reaction of **1a**, **3a**, and **2a** (Table 1, entry 1). Presumably, the steric effect of an 2-F substituent of aniline is not large. This suggestion is supported by the reaction of **1c**, **3a**, and 4-fluoro-2-bromoaniline **2l**, affording the corresponding product **4p** in 93% *ee* (Table 2, entry 15). Changing **1a** to diethyl $\alpha$-diazo(benzyl)phosphonate led to corresponding product in 74% yield with 79:21 d.r. and 57% *ee*. The absolute configuration of *syn*-**4l** was determined to be 2*S*,3*S* by X-ray crystallography using anomalous dispersion effects in diffraction measurements on the crystal (see Figure S2 in the Supporting Information).

We next extended the scope of aldehydes for this three-component reaction (Table 3, entries 1–8). Various electron-deficient aldehydes underwent the three-component reaction with [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTAD)$_4$] or [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTTL)$_4$] as catalyst to give the corresponding products in 64–83% yield with 85:15–94:6 d.r. and 66–86% *ee*. With [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTAD)$_4$] as catalyst, 4-carbomethoxybenzaldehyde **3b** was less reactive than **3a**, requiring a reaction time of 24 hours and giving the corresponding product in 77% yield and 66% *ee* (Table 3, entry 1). When the less sterically encumbered [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTTL)$_4$] was used as catalyst, the reaction was completed in 15 hours and led to slightly higher product yield and enantioselectivity (79% *ee*, Table 3, entry 2). Similar results were obtained for the reaction of **1a**, **2c**, and 3-nitrobenzaldehyde **3c** (Table 3, entries 3 and 4). When heteroaromatic aldehyde **3d** was used, catalysis with [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTAD)$_4$] and [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTTL)$_4$] led to **5c** in 64% and 65% yields and with 77% *ee* and 75% *ee*, respectively (Table 3, entries 5 and 6). The vinyl aldehyde **3e** was reactive and gave **5d** in 83% yield and with 80% *ee* when [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTTL)$_4$] was used as catalyst, but failed to give **5d** when [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTAD)$_4$] was used instead (Table 3, entries 7 and 8). Similarly, the reactions of 2-methylaniline **2b**, **1a**, and aldehyde **3b** or **3c** gave comparable results to that obtained for the similar reaction with 2-bromoaniline **2c** (Table 3, entries 9–12).

In all of the entries depicted in Tables 2 and 3, the products of carbene N–H insertion of anilines were detected

in 2–10% yields. The N–H insertion product **6** formed in the reaction of **1c**, **2b**, and **3a** (Scheme 5, Table 2, entry 11) was isolated in 8% yield and in 50% *ee* in contrast to 97% *ee* of




***Scheme 5.*** Formation of three-component coupling product **4l** versus N–H insertion product **6**.

the corresponding three-component coupling product *syn*-**4l**. This result suggests that the metal-bound ylide intermediate **B**/**C** may not be the sole species responsible for the carbene N–H insertion of anilines. Recent studies showed that transition-metal-catalyzed carbene insertion into the N–H bond of amines could be a stepwise process that involves initial ammonium ylide formation followed by [1,2]-proton shift.[6d,8,14]

In summary, we have developed a highly enantioselective metal-catalyzed three-component coupling reaction of α-diazophosphonates, anilines, and electron-deficient aldehydes. By using the chiral rhodium catalysts [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTAD)$_4$] or [$Rh_2$(*S*-PTTL)$_4$], a series of α-amino-β-hydroxyphosphonates were obtained in good to high yields and with good to high enantioselectivities. The high level of enantiocontrol provides evidence for the intermediacy of a metal-bound ammonium ylide in the nucleophilic addition step.

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**Keywords:** asymmetric catalysis · carbenoids · diazo compounds · rhodium · ylides

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