

Catalytic Oxidation of C(sp³)-H Bonds Induced by a Radical Cation Salt: Construction of 1,4-Dihydropyridines Using a Fragment-Reassembly Strategy

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Abstract: A fragment-reassembly strategy was applied to the construction of 1,4-dihydropyridines and phosphorus-substituted 1,4-dihydropyridines under catalytic radical cation salt-induced C(sp³)-H functionalization of glycine derivatives. Mechanistic studies show that domino C(sp³)-H bond oxidation and C-N bond cleavage reactions are involved.

Keywords: C-H oxidation; C-N cleavage; 1,4-dihydropyridines; fragment-reassembly strategy; radical cation salts

The substitution reaction, where a leaving group is substituted by a nucleophile to construct a new C-C or C-X bond is fundamental in chemistry. Generally, a leaving group such as a halide or pseudohalide possessing a polarized and labile bond to the site of nucleophilic attack is essential to a successful substitution reaction [Figure 1, Eq. (1)]. Conversely, amines have been virtually overlooked as leaving groups, despite the numerous examples of their use as nucleophiles in substitution reactions.^[1] The relatively high stability of the respective C-N bond, contrasts some of the desired characteristics of a good leaving group. It is for this reason that examples of amine leaving groups are limited in the literature. More importantly, the few reported uses have resulted in the permanent loss of the N-leaving group to stoichiometric waste [Figure 1, Eq. (2)]. Mindful of these limitations, we were interested in designing a methodology to expand the scope of amine leaving groups, while addressing the critical issue of nitrogen loss. We questioned whether the amino group of the starting material, which initially acts as a leaving group, could be

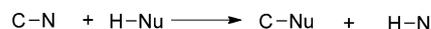
trapped by an active functional group after it is expelled from the parent substrate [Figure 1, Eq. (3)]. We sought to test this hypothesis in the synthesis of 1,4-dihydropyridines (1,4-DHP) (Figure 2). This

1. Classical substitution reaction



LG = halide, OTs, etc. *inorganic or organic waste*

2. Amino group as leaving group via C-N bond cleavage



N = NHR, NHTs, etc. *inorganic or organic waste*

3. Fragment-reassembly strategy (this work)

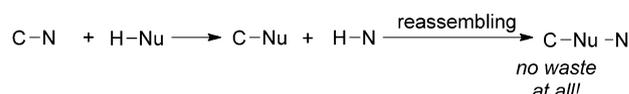


Figure 1. Normal substitution reactions vs. fragment-reassembly strategy.

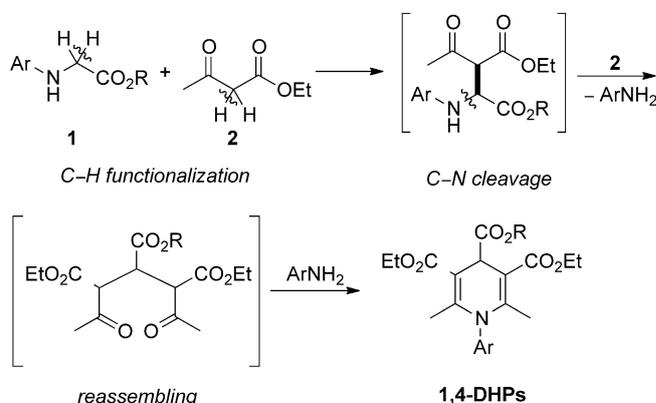
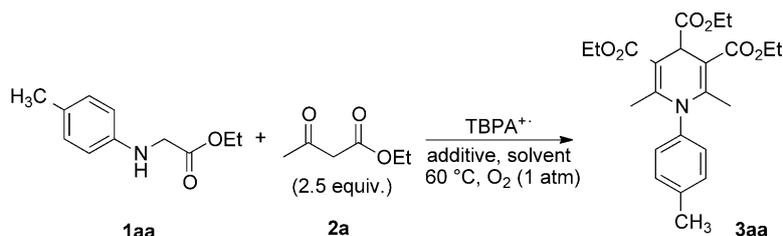


Figure 2. Construction of 1,4-DHPs by the fragment-reassembly strategy.

Table 1. Optimization of the reaction conditions.

Entry	Solvent	TBPA ⁺ (mol%)	Additive (10 mol%)	Time [h]	Yield ^[a] [%]
1	CH ₃ CN	5	InCl ₃	24	38
2	CH ₃ CN	10	InCl ₃	2.5	55
3	CH ₃ CN	20	InCl ₃	2.5	57
4	CH ₂ Cl ₂	10	InCl ₃	24	< 10
5	CHCl ₃	10	InCl ₃	24	< 5
6	THF	10	InCl ₃	24	trace
7	MeOH	10	InCl ₃	24	51
8	EtOH	10	InCl ₃	24	30
9	CH ₃ CN	10	FeCl ₂	20	10
10	CH ₃ CN	10	BF ₃ ·Et ₂ O	12	42
11	CH ₃ CN	10	FeCl ₃	12	60
12	CH ₃ CN	10	CuI	12	56
13	CH ₃ CN	10	CuBr ₂	12	57
14	CH ₃ CN	10	CuCl	12	40
15	CH ₃ CN	10	CuBr	1.5	47
16	CH ₃ CN	10	CAN	24	34
17	CH ₃ CN	10	Mn(OAc) ₃	24	25

^[a] Reaction conditions: glycine ester **1aa** (0.5 mmol), 1,3-dicarbonyl compound **2a** (1.25 mmol), TBPA⁺ (10 mol%), additive (10 mol%), 5 mL solvent, 60 °C, under 1 atm O₂; all yields are of isolated products.

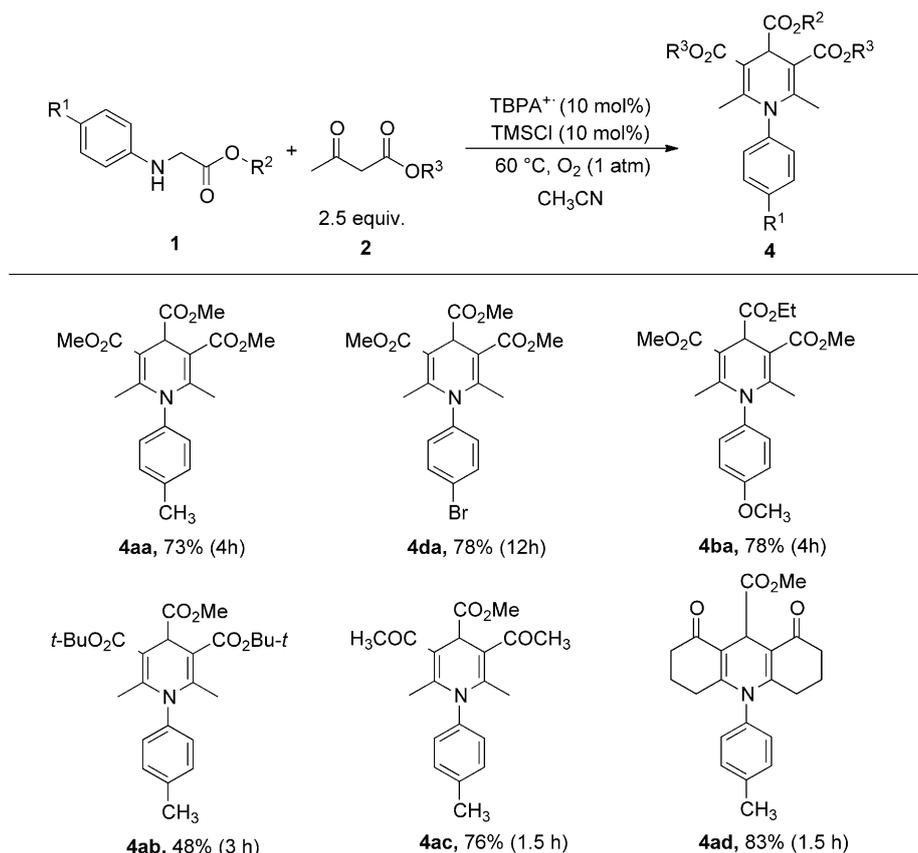
atom-economic approach would represent an interesting example of nitrogen being used as an incorporable leaving group. If this fragment-reassembly strategy would be feasible, it could be of high synthetic importance as it could inspire new synthetic disconnections in heterocycle synthesis.

1,4-DHPs are an important class of drugs for the treatment of cardiovascular diseases. One example being nitrendipine, which is a DHP calcium channel blocker and is used in the treatment of primary hypertension to decrease blood pressure.^[2] Hantzsch 1,4-dihydropyridine derivatives are regarded as models of coenzyme NADH to investigate the biological hydride transfer mechanism.^[3] Hantzsch esters also are widely used as hydride donors in catalytic hydrogenation including asymmetric variants.^[4,5] Until now, the synthesis of Hantzsch 1,4-DHP derivatives is mainly confined to the classical Hantzsch reaction as well as some limited approaches.^[6] Thus, more efficient and convenient synthetic methods which allow access to these derivatives are a worthwhile endeavour.

Recently, we reported, for the first time, the catalytic radical cation-initiated C–H functionalization of glycine derivatives with styrenes to build quinoline skeletons both inter- and intramolecularly.^[7] This method represented a novel approach to CDCs (cross

dehydrogenative coupling reactions), avoiding using excess quantities of the oxidants (such as DDO, TEMPO, oxoammonium, and peroxides).^[8] This methodology was also applied to the catalytic aromatization of 1,4-dihydropyridines.^[9] When other nucleophiles (indoles, for example) were used to trap the *in situ* generated radical intermediate, C–N cleavage occurred, producing the corresponding aniline by-products.^[10] If 1,3-dicarbonyls were employed, the leaving anilines would further react with the 1,5-dicarbonyl intermediate to form 1,4-dihydropyridines (Figure 2).^[11] To test the possibility of this fragment-reassembling strategy, the reaction between glycine ester and ethyl acetoacetate was employed under catalytic radical cation salt-induced conditions. To our great delight, the reaction occurred smoothly, producing the desired 1,4-dihydropyridines in moderate yield. Herein, we wish to report a novel method for the direct functionalization of C(sp³)–H bonds of glycine derivatives using the fragment-reassembly strategy, to construct 1,4-dihydropyridines.

We began our study with reaction of glycine ester (**1aa**) with ethyl acetoacetate (**2a**) in the presence of TBPA⁺ [tris(4-bromophenyl)aminium hexachloroantimonate] (Table 1). In the presence of 5 mol% of TBPA⁺ and 10 mol% InCl₃ under O₂ (1 atm), the re-



Scheme 2. The reactions between glycines and 1,3-dicarbonyls. All yields are of isolated products.

in further functionalizations. In the absence of a *para*-substituent at the aniline, the 1,4-dihydropyridines were isolated in lower yields (**3bf**). The main reasons probably lie in the fact that when the substrate was oxidized, coupling on the *para*-position of the aniline section would occur.^[13]

Having demonstrated the scope of glycine ester **1** in the fragment-reassembly reaction of **2a**, we wanted to explore the scope further by employing other 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds.^[14] The results show that not only β -keto esters, but also 1,3-diketones reacted with glycine esters to give the desired products in good yields (Scheme 2), in which the structure of **4da** was unambiguously assigned by X-ray crystallographic analysis (Figure 3).^[15] Only *tert*-butyl acetoacetate gave a lower yield (**4ab**), presumably due to steric hindrance.

It is well-known that organophosphorus compounds are important substrates in the study of biochemical processes, and amino phosphonates play an important role as enzyme inhibitors, agrochemicals, and pharmaceuticals, due to their structural resemblance to the corresponding amino acids.^[16] Azaheterocyclic phosphonates, as an important class of derivatives of amino phosphonates, have been studied intensively for agriculture to medicine purposes.^[17]

Given success in the efficient construction of the skeleton of 1,4-dihydropyridines *via* the fragment-reassembly strategy, we decided to apply this methodology to a more challenging target, phosphorus-substituted 1,4-dihydropyridines, whose synthesis was only achieved in limited cases.^[18] To our delight, α -anilino phosphonates reacted with 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds smoothly to afford the 4-phosphonylated 1,4-dihydropyridines in good yields (Scheme 3). We believe that

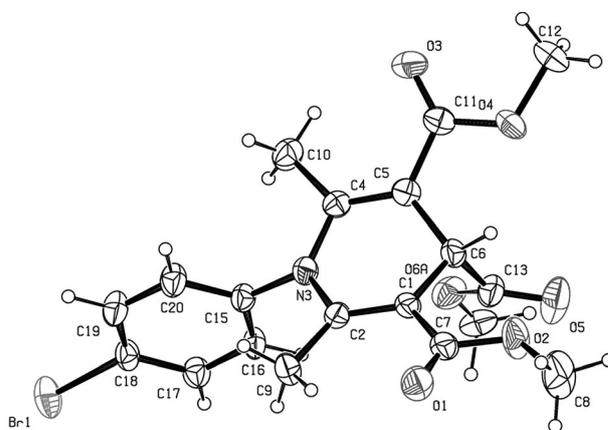
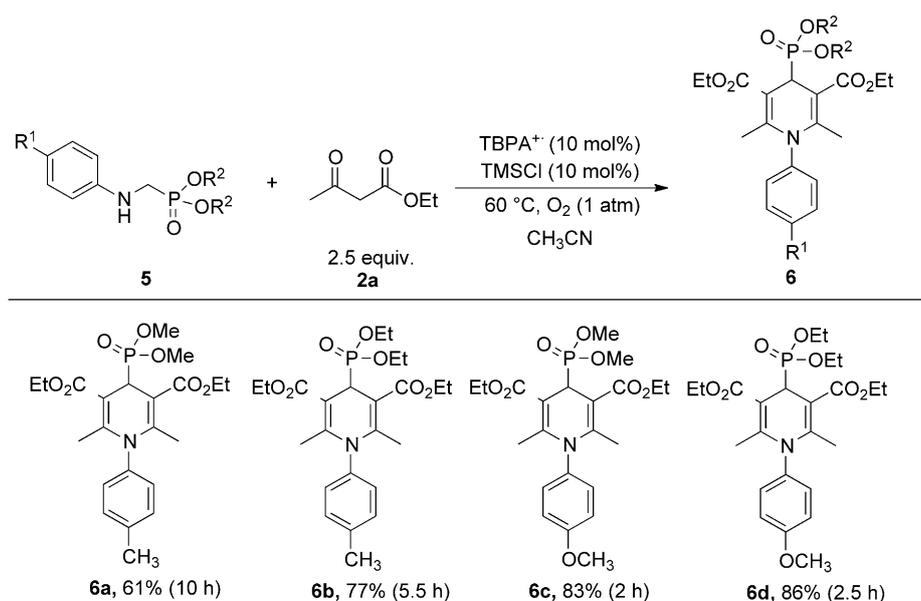
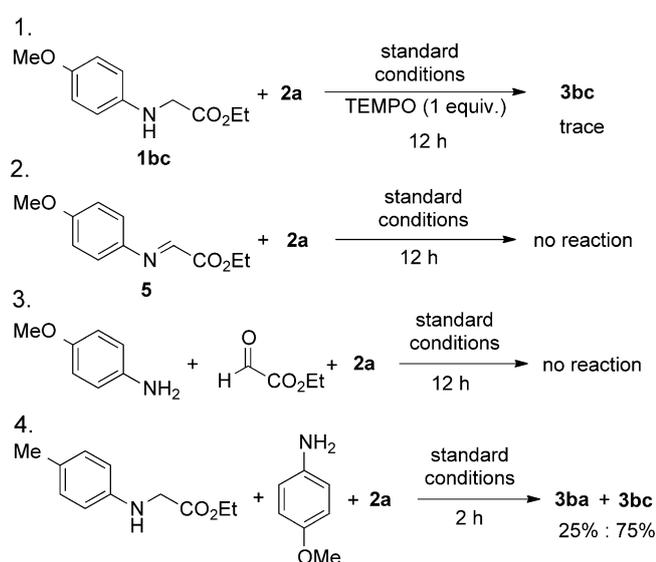


Figure 3. ORTEP drawing of product **4da**.



Scheme 3. Synthesis of phosphorus 1,4-dihydropyridines *via* the fragment-reassembly strategy. All yields are of isolated products.



Scheme 4. Control experiments.

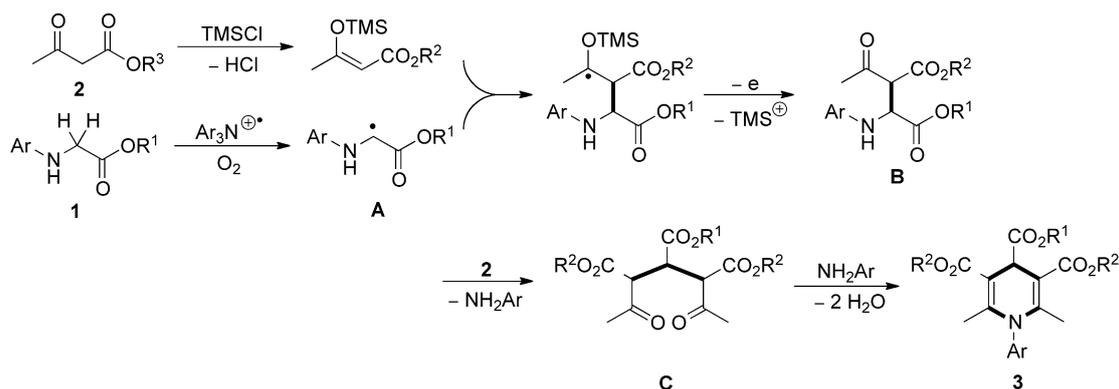
these transformations provide a new way to the synthesis of phosphorous azaheterocycles. Studies on further applications in the construction of this class of azaheterocyclic phosphonates are still underway in this laboratory, and will be reported in due course.

To probe the mechanism of this transformation, several experiments were performed (Scheme 4). The reaction between **1bc** and **2a** was conducted in the presence of 1 equivalent of the radical inhibitor TEMPO and the reactivity was almost fully attenuated and only trace amounts of the desired product was detected, which implied that free radical intermediate was involved in the reaction process [Scheme 4, Eq.

(1)]. When the standard reaction conditions were applied to glycine imine **5**, the reaction was messy, and no 1,4-dihydropyridines was detected by ¹H NMR analysis of the crude reaction mixture. This is caused by the glycine imines being prone to be oxidation. These results show that the reaction proceeded *via* radical addition instead of imine formation (see Scheme 5). A three-component reaction of aniline, ethyl glyoxalate and ethyl acetoacetate was further performed, and only a trace of the 1,4-dihydropyridine was formed, which also partly rules out the formation of imine. To confirm the process of C–N bond cleavage, a competing experiment between *N*-(4-methylphenyl)glycine ester, 4-methoxyaniline and **2a** was conducted. From crude ¹H NMR analysis we can see that products **3ba** and **3bc** were generated in a ratio of 1:3, which demonstrated that anilines were formed *in situ* *via* C–N bond cleavage.

Based on the results of control experiments, a plausible mechanism was proposed. Glycine ester was oxidized by TBPA⁺ in the presence of O₂, yielding a radical intermediate **A**, which readily reacted with 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds catalyzed by TMSCl. After oxidation and loss of TMS⁺, which was regenerated and participated in the next catalytic cycle, an intermediate **B** was generated, and then C–N bond cleavage occurred, in which the aniline group served as a leaving group, producing a 1,5-dicarbonyl intermediate **C**. The leaving aniline further reacted with this 1,5-dicarbonyl intermediate to afford the 1,4-dihydropyridine product. More details of the mechanism are currently under investigation in this laboratory.

In conclusion, we have demonstrated the efficient synthesis of 1,4-dihydropyridines using the fragment-



Scheme 5. The proposed mechanism.

reassemble strategy proceeding *via* radical cation salt-prompted C(sp³)-H oxidation/C-N bond cleavage. The catalytic aerobic oxidation of glycine esters was screened for a broad range of substrates. This approach provides a direct access to biologically relevant 1,4-dihydropyridines in high yields. It is worth highlighting that 4-phosphonylated 1,4-dihydropyridine can also be generated efficiently by this method. The mild reaction conditions, good functional group tolerance and the high efficiency of the oxidative functionalization make the present transformation attractive for future applications. Further studies are in progress in our laboratory.

Experimental Section

Typical Procedure

A solution of **1aa** (0.5 mmol), **2a** (1.25 mmol) and TMSCl (10 mol%) in CH₃CN (3 mL) was mixed fully and flushed with O₂ (keep flushing until the reaction completed), then the solution of TBPA⁺ (10 mol%) in CH₃CN (2 mL) was added dropwise. The reaction solution was stirred under 60 °C. After completion as monitored by TLC (2.5 h), the reaction was quenched with sodium carbonate/methanol solution. The mixture was poured into a separatory funnel with the addition of excess DCM, and then the crude organic solution was extracted three times with water to remove inorganic salts. The organic phase was then dried over anhydrous magnesium sulfate, filtered, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the products were separated by basic aluminium oxide column chromatography eluted with petroleum ether/acetone (v/v 20:1) to afford the product **3aa**; yield: 78%.

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- [13] See the supporting information of ref.^[8f]
- [14] We tested the possibility to synthesize unsymmetrical DHPs, using two different 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds, but a mixture of DHPs was isolated. From crude the ¹H NMR spectrum, the unsymmetrical DHP was the minor product. These results show that the synthesis of unsymmetrical DHPs was still a great problem based on the present method.
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