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**Title:** Re-Engineering Chemical Glycosylation: Direct, Metal-Free Anomeric O-Arylation of Unactivated Carbohydrates

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# Re-Engineering Chemical Glycosylation: Direct, Metal-Free Anomeric O-Arylation of Unactivated Carbohydrates

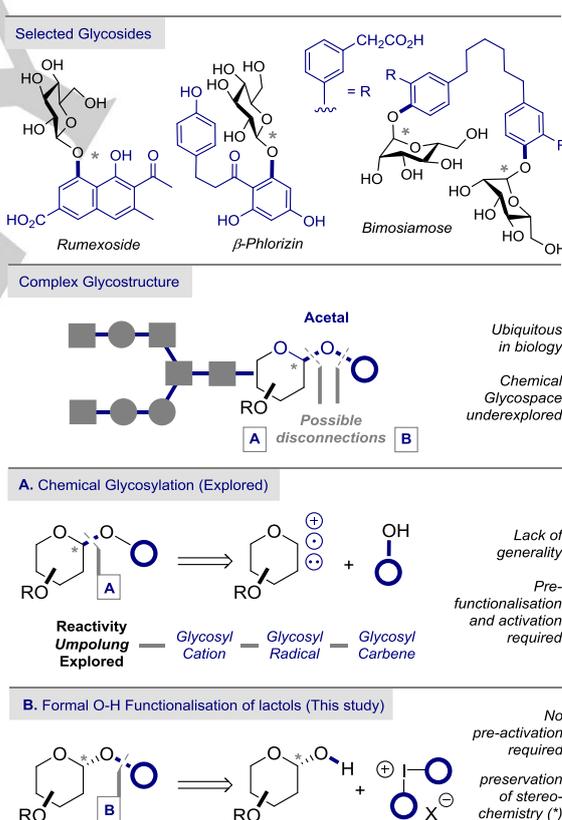
Dr. Nicola Lucchetti, and Prof. Dr. Ryan Gilmour\*

**Abstract:** To sustain innovation in glycobiology, effective routes to well-defined carbohydrate probes must be developed. For over a century, glycosylation has been dominated by formation of the anomeric C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-O acetal junction in glycostructures. A dissociative mechanistic spectrum spanning S<sub>N</sub>1 and S<sub>N</sub>2 is frequently operational thereby complicating efficiency. By re-engineering this venerable process, an orthogonal disconnection allows the acetal to be forged directly from the reducing sugar without the need for substrate pre-functionalisation. Engagement with stable arylidonium salts facilitates a formal O-H functionalisation reaction. This allows lactols to undergo mild, metal-free O-arylation at ambient temperature. The efficiency of the transformation has been validated using a variety of pyranoside and furanoside monosaccharides in addition to biologically relevant *di*- and *tri*-saccharides (up to 85%). Fluorinated mechanistic probes that augment the anomeric effect have been employed. It is envisaged that this strategy will prove expansive for the construction of complex acetals under substrate-based stereocontrol.

The functional virtuosity of complex carbohydrates is reflected in their structural diversity.<sup>[1]</sup> Central to the energy, architectural and molecular recognition aspects of cell biology, glycostructures continue to provide a rich source of innovation for the design of novel pharmaceuticals and materials.<sup>[2]</sup> This is particularly prominent in phenolic glycosides such as the antibiotic *Vancomycin*.<sup>[3]</sup> However, exploring and harnessing carbohydrate function is frequently compromised by synthetic challenges.<sup>[4]</sup> In contrast to peptides and nucleic acids, the efficiency with which complex sugars are produced biosynthetically cannot easily be emulated in a laboratory paradigm. An amalgamation of regio- and stereo-selectivity complications, further compounded by complex conformational equilibria, render carbohydrate coupling protocols less general than the aforementioned biomolecule classes. Whilst advances in automation have significantly alleviated the synthesis bottleneck,<sup>[5]</sup> innovative coupling methods to construct the acetal junction intrinsic to carbohydrates must be developed in parallel. When considering glycostructures of translational relevance to medicine, phenolic glycosides have emerged as venerable blueprints. Exploited for over a century as anti-inflammatory agents,<sup>[6]</sup> aryl capped glycosides based on *β-Phlorizin* have emerged as powerful and selective SGLT2 inhibitors for the clinical management of type II diabetes.<sup>[7]</sup> This motif also features in *Bimosiamose* for the treatment of psoriasis and asthma,<sup>[8]</sup> a plenum of myelin-associated glycoprotein (MAG) antagonists,<sup>[9]</sup> and in the natural product *Rumexoside* (Figure 1, top). Indeed, a recent survey of U.S. FDA approved drugs containing oxygen heterocycles by Njardarson and co-workers revealed that pyranoses and furanoses are the top two most frequently employed motifs.<sup>[10]</sup> Reconciling the pre-eminence of glycosylated molecules in human medicine with the dearth of effective strategies for their construction is exemplified by a recent study by Schepartz and Miller on the rapid O-glycosylation.<sup>[11]</sup> Consequently, strategies to facilitate the efficient synthesis of diverse

aryl glycosides have been intensively pursued.<sup>[12]</sup> Predicated on retrosynthetic analysis of the anomeric C(sp<sup>3</sup>)-O bond (Figure 1, upper centre, disconnection A), a plethora of protocols for aromatic O-glycosylation has been developed. These strategies traverse the *Umpolung* spectrum proceeding via postulated glycosyl cations,<sup>[4]</sup> radicals and carbenes (Figure 1, lower centre).<sup>[13]</sup> Furthermore significant advances in translating chemical glycosylation to a catalysis paradigm have enriched the field.<sup>[4,14]</sup>

To complement the existing glycosylation ordnance, it was envisaged that re-engineering the acetal linkage via strategic disconnection B (Figure 1, lower) would provide an attractive alternative for aryl glycoside formation. This O-H functionalisation reaction would mitigate the need for substrate-pre-functionalisation / activation sequences and allow reducing sugars to be used directly. A stereoretentive reaction would also allow chirality encoded at C1 to be translated to the product. Herein, a direct, metal-free, O-arylation of *mono*-, *di*- and *tri*-saccharides at the lactol position is validated using simple arylidonium salts as the electrophilic partner (Figure 1, lower).



**Figure 1. Top: Examples of pharmaceutically relevant aryl glycosides. Upper centre: A generic glycostructure indicating the two possible disconnections of the acetal junction. Lower centre: A conceptual overview of glycosylation strategies based on strategic disconnection A. Bottom: A conceptual alternative via an O-H functionalisation exploiting arylidonium reagents (disconnection B).**

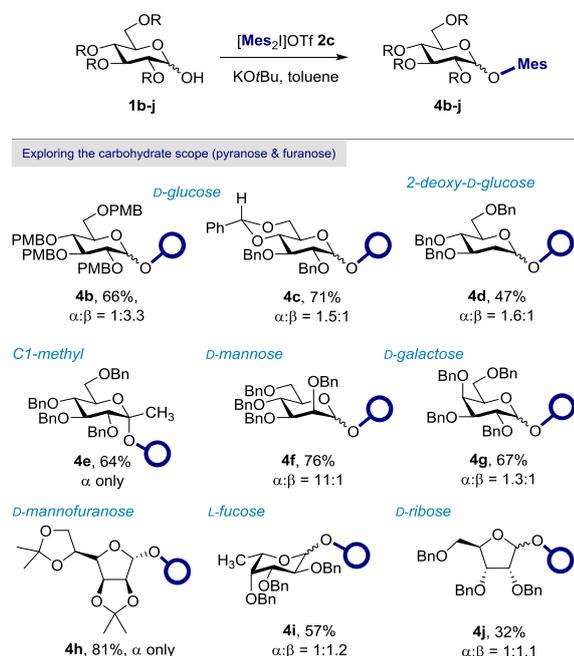
Aryl-λ<sup>3</sup>-iodane salts<sup>[15,16]</sup> have emerged as powerful and versatile arylating reagents.<sup>[17]</sup> Pertinent examples include Olofsson's elegant functionalisation of diaryliodonium salts to decorate the periphery of sugars,<sup>[18a]</sup> and Toste's diastereoselective acetalisation with chiral

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Finally, the L-fucose derivative **4i** was obtained in 57% yield, whilst the arylated D-ribose **4j** was obtained in 32% yield (anomeric ratio  $\alpha:\beta = 1:1.1$ ).

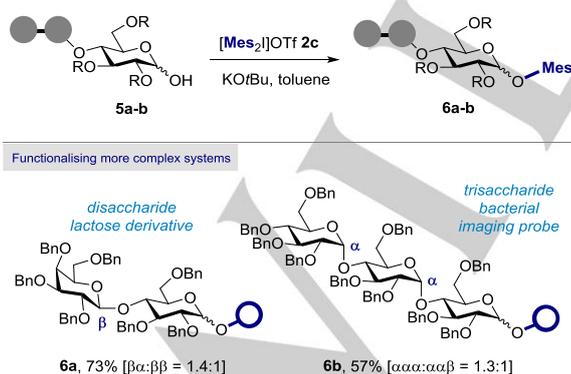
**Scheme 2.** O-Arylation of pyranoses and furanoses utilising arylodionium salt **2c**.<sup>[a]</sup>



[a] Reaction were performed in toluene on a 0.15 mmol scale at ambient temperature. The  $\alpha:\beta$  ratio was determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy.

To validate this alternative to chemical glycosylation on more complex glycostructures, a representative O–H functionalisation using **2c** was performed on a biologically relevant *di*- and *tri*-saccharide (Scheme 3). Exposing the lactose derivative **5a** to the optimised arylation conditions at ambient temperature smoothly furnished the desired glycoside **6a** in 73% yield ( $\beta\alpha:\beta\beta$  1.4:1). Furthermore the trisaccharide **6b**, commonly employed in bacterial imaging,<sup>[23]</sup> was isolated in 57% yield ( $\alpha\alpha\alpha:\alpha\alpha\beta$  1.3:1)

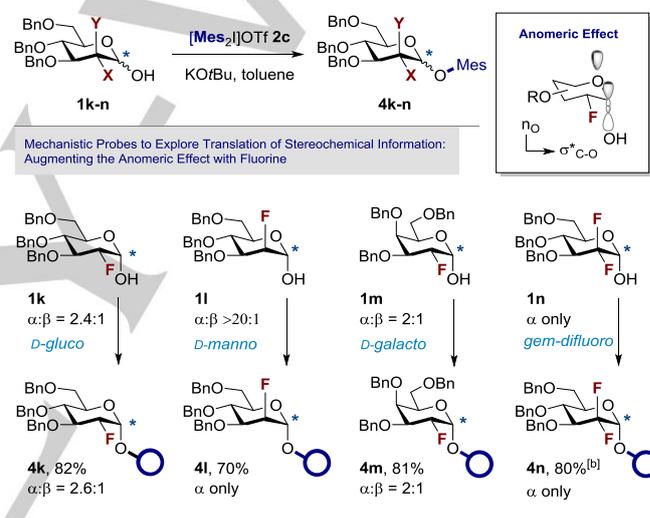
**Scheme 3.** Extending the O-arylation to more complex carbohydrates.



Having established a broad substrate scope for the transformation, the conservation of stereochemistry was interrogated (Scheme 4). To that end, a series of fluorinated substrates were prepared to augment the anomeric effect.<sup>[24]</sup> The presence of the electron withdrawing group at C2 ensures that the equilibrium favours the  $\alpha$ -anomer of the reducing sugar: This in turn should be mirrored in the product composition in

the case of a stereoretentive process. Furthermore, 2-fluoro sugars remain privileged tools for mechanistic enzymology and in stereoselective glycosylation.<sup>[25]</sup> Interestingly, classic trichloroacetimidate activation of **1a** with a Lewis acid (TMSOTf) favours formation of the  $\beta$ -glycoside.<sup>[25c]</sup> However, with this protocol the predominant  $\alpha$ -composition of the lactol is transmitted to the product ( $\alpha:\beta$  2.4:1 versus 2.6:1 for **1k** and **4k** respectively). In the D-mannose case **1l**  $\rightarrow$  **4l**, complete stereoretention was again observed ( $\alpha$  only). This feature of the process was further confirmed with the D-galactose system: **1m**  $\rightarrow$  **4m**,  $\alpha:\beta$  2:1  $\rightarrow$  2:1, and finally with the *geminal*-difluoro system: **1n**  $\rightarrow$  **4n**,  $\alpha \rightarrow \alpha$ ). Interestingly, the trichloroacetimidate donor of the latter substrate (**1n**) is completely recalcitrant to classic glycosylation conditions<sup>[25c]</sup> and thus this method provides a handle to install C2 *gem*-difluorinated building blocks into structures of interest. Collectively, these data are consistent with a mechanistic framework that proceeds via an I(III) intermediate that is not prone to epimerisation prior to reductive elimination (Scheme 4, lower).

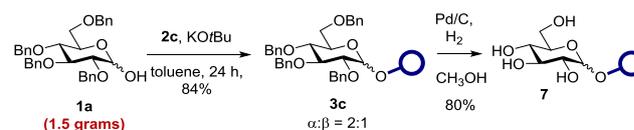
**Scheme 4.** Top: Exploring the stereoretentive nature of the O-arylation using fluorinated probes to enhance the anomeric effect. Bottom: Tentative mechanism.<sup>[a]</sup>



[a] Reaction were performed in toluene on a 0.15 mmol scale at ambient temperature. [b] Reaction were performed in toluene on a 0.22 mmol scale at ambient temperature. The  $\alpha:\beta$  ratio was determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy.

Finally, the utility of the method towards scale-up was explored on a 1.5 g scale (Scheme 5). The desired aryl ether **3a** was isolated in an increased 84% yield upon stirring for 24 h without any erosion in the anomeric ratio ( $\alpha:\beta = 2:1$ ). Global deprotection under hydrogenolysis conditions (H<sub>2</sub>, Pd/C, methanol at ambient temperature), furnished **7** in 80% yield.

**Scheme 5.** Representative scale-up and global deprotection.



In summary, a mild, one-pot, procedure for the efficient and scalable synthesis of O-functionalised carbohydrates is disclosed. Predicated on a stereoretentive O–H functionalisation of the reducing sugar (lactol)

this alternative disconnection to conventional glycosylation constitutes a facile and expansive platform for the preparation of aryl glycosides. Promoted by easily accessible electrophilic iodine(III) reagents, the process does not require the classic pre-functionalisation / activation sequence inherent to classical glycosylation methods. Validated for both pyranosyl and furanosyl substrates, the reaction is compatible with a variety of arylating agents and tolerates a range of protecting groups and substituents. The process is particularly suited to the synthesis of fluorinated glycostructures where the stereoelectronic effects of the 2-fluoro substituent can be incorporated into the reaction design to promote formation of  $\alpha$ -configured products. Given the generality of this enabling technology, we envisage that it will find application in the preparation of complex acetals in a broader sense.

## Acknowledgements

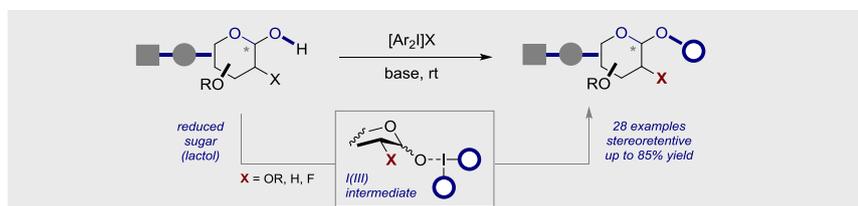
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**Keywords:** acetal • arylation • fluorine • stereoretention • sugars

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## Entry for the Table of Contents

## COMMUNICATION



Nicola Lucchetti, Ryan Gilmour\*

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