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Asymmetric Markovnikov Hydroaminocarbonylation of Alkenes Enabled by Palladium-Monodentate Phosphoramidite Catalysis

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ABSTRACT: A palladium-catalyzed asymmetric Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation of alkenes with anilines has been developed for the atom-economical synthesis of 2-substituted propanamides bearing an α -stereocenter. A novel phosphoramidite ligand L16 was discovered which exhibited very high reactivity and selectivity in the reaction. This asymmetric Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation employs readily available starting materials and tolerates a wide range of functional groups, thus providing a facile and straightforward method for the regio- and enantioselective synthesis of 2-substituted propanamides under ambient conditions. Mechanistic studies revealed that the reaction proceeds through a palladium hydride pathway.

ydrocarbonylation of alkenes is one of the most fundamental and ideal reactions for the synthesis of carbonyl compounds from readily available feedstocks.¹ Whereas hydroalkoxycarbonylations^{2,3} and hydrothiocarbonylations⁴ have been extensively developed over the past decades and the state-of-the-art Pd-catalyzed methoxycarbonylation of ethylene has been conducted on a >300,000 ton per annum scale,⁵ hydroaminocarbonylation, a reaction analogous with hydroalkoxycarbonylation and hydrothiocarbonylation, has been far less well established. The original catalytic systems for hydroaminocarbonylations based on Co, Ni, Fe, and Ru complexes are operated at high temperatures and often accompanied by aminoformylation side reactions, thus resulting in limited substrate scope and fewer applications.⁶ Recently, ligand-controlled regiodivergent Pdcatalyzed hydroaminocarbonylations, which were promising approaches to access either linear or branched amides, have been developed by the groups of Beller,⁷ Cole-Hamilton,⁸ Liu,⁵ Huang,¹⁰ and Alper¹¹ (Scheme 1 A,B).¹² Despite these advances, Pd-catalyzed asymmetric Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylations of alkenes with simultaneous control of the regio- and enantioselectivity of the reaction, as well as a straightforward and atom-economical approach to pharmaceutically interesting chiral amides with an α -stereocenter, have not been realized so far.

In general, the use of bidentate ligands favors Pd-catalyzed *anti*-Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylations for the formation of linear amides,^{7a,b,8,10a} while Pd-catalyzed Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation prefers resorting to a monodentate ligand.^{7c,9,10b,11,13} Nevertheless, as a result of there being no "chelate effect", enantioselective monodentate ligand-assisted carbonylations with competitively coordinative CO are always tough issues.¹⁴ In addition, the high temperatures and pressures that are generally required in this type of reactions would make enantiocontrol much more difficult.¹⁵ With the goal of simultaneous control of regio- and enantioselectivities of hydroaminocarbonylation, we present herein a novel Pd-catalyzed asymmetric Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation

Scheme 1. Pd-Catalyzed Hydroaminocarbonylation of Alkenes with Amines



of alkenes with anilines (Scheme 1 C). By utilizing a new PdI_2 phosphoramidite ligand catalytic system, the features of the reaction include the following: (i) *Effectiveness*. The

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hydroaminocarbonylation was operated under mild ambient conditions and achieved in a regio- and enantioselective manner. (ii) *Generality*. The reaction was suitable for a range of substrates including alkenylarenes and aliphatic alkenes, and primary and secondary anilines, and exhibited good compatibility with sensitive functional groups such as bromo, phenolic hydroxyl, and nitro. (iii) *Utility*. The utility the reaction is demonstrated in the synthesis of the anti-inflammatory new chemical entity (NCE) **St** in one step and in the syntheses of ibuprofen, naproxen, and flurbiprofen in two steps.

We initiated our investigations with Pd-catalyzed Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation of styrene 1a and aniline 2a at 60 °C under CO atmosphere (50 atm) in THF (Table 1).



^{*a*}Conditions: unless otherwise noted, **1a** (0.15 mmol), **2a** (0.1 mmol), PdI₂ (10 mol%), ligand (11 mol%), CO (50 atm), THF (1.0 mL), 60 °C, 48 h. Isolated yields. The ratios of branched to linear isomers shown within parentheses were determined by GC-MS analysis of the crude products. Enantiomeric excess was determined by chiral HPLC analysis. ^{*b*}The reaction was performed at room temperature (rt) for 72 h. ^{*c*}10 °C, 72 h. ^{*d*}CO (30 atm), rt, 72 h. **L17** was based on BINOL framework.

Owing to the unique advantages of monophosphine ligands in this type of reactions, a variety of privileged monodentate chiral ligands (L1–L5) were screened first. The reaction occurred at low temperature (60 °C) with ferrocenylphosphine L2 and phosphoramidite L4 or L5 as the ligand, albeit in low yields and low enantiomeric excess (ee). These primary results inspired us to further search for an effective monodentate ligand for the reaction. In this context, various phosphoramidite ligands (L6–L10) with different amino substituents were screened. It was found that phenoxazinyl (L10) was the best choice in terms of the reactivity, regioselectivity, and enantioselectivity of the reaction. Subsequently, various phosphoramidite ligands with a range of electronic variation at the 3,3'-positions of the H₈-BINOL framework were prepared and screened (L11–L16). Encouragingly, the yield and ee of 3a achieved important improvement in these cases, with 4-^{*i*}BuOPh and phenoxazinyl (POA) substituents L16 being the most optimal. Due to the high reactivity of the new ligand L16 (98% yield), the optimal reaction conditions to afford the corresponding 3a with 94% ee in 98% yield (branched-to-linear (b/l) ratio >99:1) were obtained by lowering the reaction temperature to ambient conditions. Notably, further lowering the reaction temperature to 10 °C and also the pressure of CO to 30 atm, or employing BINOLtype L17 as the ligand, gave rise to inferior results.

With the optimal reaction conditions in hand, we focused our effort on the reaction scope (Table 2). First, the scope of anilines was investigated (Table 2A). Anilines with electrondonating substituents, such as alkyl and methoxy, underwent the Pd-catalyzed Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation smoothly to afford the desired products in high yields and high ee values (3a-3k, 62-98% yield, 91-98% ee). Notably, the sterically bulky 2,6-dimethylaniline and 2,6-diisopropylaniline were compatible with the above conditions, implying that the reaction is insensitive to the steric effect of anilines. Owing to the stronger nucleophilicity of anilines than that of phenols,^{11,17} simultaneous chemo-, regio-, and enantioselective reactions were observed to afford the corresponding single isomers 3l-3n in 72-91% yields and 88-95% ee when aminophenols were used as the substrates. Anilines with halide substituents, such as F and Cl, and strong electron-withdrawing groups, such as NO₂, were tolerated in the reaction to deliver the desired products 3o-3q in high yields and ee's. Additionally, naphthylamines and even coordinative 8-aminoquinoline were also tolerated in the reactions (3r-3t).

Secondary anilines were tested in the reaction as well. As depicted in Table 2B, various N-alkylanilines, including indoline and tetrahydroquinoline, were compatible with the conditions to give rise to the corresponding 2-phenylpropanamides 4a-4i in high yields and ee values. The substrate scope with respect to alkenylarenes was also investigated (Table 2C). All of the para-, meta-, and ortho-methyl-substituted styrenes gave the corresponding 2-arylpropanamides 5a-5c in high yields and ee values, thus indicating that the reaction is insensitive to the sterics of the styrenes. Styrenes with electrondonating groups on aryl rings displayed higher reactivity than those with electron-withdrawing groups in the reaction, but all of the MeO-, AcO-, F-, Cl-, Br-, and NO₂-substituted styrenes afforded the desired 2-arylpropanamides 5d-5m in high ee values. The compatibility of aryl chloride (5i-5k) and aryl bromide (51) not only indicates that there was no reactive Pd(0) species in the reaction but they could also facilitate further functionalization reactions at the retained carbonhalogen bond. In addition, enantioenriched 2-naphthylpropanamides 5n and 50 could be synthesized in high yields through our reactions where alkenylnaphthalenes were employed as the starting materials.

To demonstrate the utility of this Pd-catalyzed asymmetric Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation (Table 2D), ibuprofen, naproxen, flurbiprofen and ketoprofen-derived 2arylpropanamides 5p-5s were synthesized in high yields and ee values with the respective alkenylarenes and aniline as the starting materials. As a result, a series of enantioenriched nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), including ibuprofen 6, naproxen 7, flurbiprofen 8, and ketoprofen, were Table 2. Palladium-Catalyzed Asymmetric Markovnikov Hydroaminocarbonylation of Alkenylarenes with Anilines^a



^{*a*}Conditions: alkenylarene 1 (0.15 mmol), aniline 2 (0.10 mmol), PdI₂ (10 mol%), L16 (11 mol%), CO (50 atm), THF (1.0 mL), rt, 72 h. Isolated yields. The ratios of branched to linear isomers (b/l) were determined by GC-MS analysis of the crude products. ^{*b*}Conditions: 1 M H₂SO₄ (aq, 1.0 mL), 1,4-dioxane (1.0 mL), 80 °C, 8 h.

obtained in high yields by an additional hydrolysis step from 5p-5s. The *p*-amidophenol-derived NSAIDs, which were recognized as NCEs, displayed reduced ulcerogenic potential compared to their parent NSAIDs and enhanced anti-pyretic activity compared to paracetamol.¹⁸ In this context, the antiinflammatory NCE 5t was synthesized in one step under our conditions by employing 1-isobutyl-4-vinylbenzene and 4aminophenol as the starting materials.

Furthermore, the scope and limitations of aliphatic alkenes were explored (Table 3). Ethylene was well compatible with

Table 3. Palladium-Catalyzed Hydroaminocarbonylation of Aliphatic Alkenes with Aniline a



^{*a*}Conditions: alkene 1 (0.30 mmol), aniline 2a (0.20 mmol), PdI₂ (10 mol%), L16 (11 mol%), CO (50 atm), THF (2.0 mL), rt, 72 h. Isolated yields. The ratios of branched to linear isomers (b/l) were determined by GC-MS analysis of the crude products. ^{*b*}Alkene (ethylene, propene, 1-butene) (1 atm). ^{*c*}60 °C.

the conditions to afford the desired propionanilide 9a in 93% vield, although the regio- and enantioselectivities were not involved in the reaction. In general, the transition-metalcatalyzed Markovnikov hydrocarbonylations (hydroformylation, hydroalkoxycarbonylation, and hydroaminocarbonylation) of aliphatic alkenes toward branched carbonyl compounds are particularly not favored because of the increasing steric effects for both the step of alkene insertion into the [M–H] to form the secondary carbon-metal species and the step of CO insertion into the secondary carbon-metal species.^{3a,15a,19} Meanwhile, the Pd-catalyzed Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation of propene for the formation of isobutyrylanilide **9b** with b/l = 91:9 was achieved in 90% yield under our conditions. Encouraged by this result, we then evaluated various alkenes. Non-functionalized bulk aliphatic alkenes, such as 1-butene, 1-hexene, 1-octene, 1-decene, and methyl 10-undecenoate were tolerated under the conditions to afford the corresponding branched amides 9c-9g with b/l =83:17 to 91:9 in high yields. Presumably due to the lack of functional groups that can provide binding or affinity interaction with the catalyst as well as the very small differentiation of the two prochiral faces of aliphatic alkenes, low ee values were obtained in these cases. However, the situation can be partially improved by utilizing sterically

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hindered substrates. For example, the alkenes substituted with more sterically demanding isopropyl or cyclohexanyl group produced their desired amides **9h** and **9i** with moderate regioselectivities in high yields and with 57–63% ee values.

To gain mechanistic insight into the reaction, control experiments were performed (Table 4). First, it was found that

Table 4. Control Experiments



Conditions: styrene Ia (0.15 mmol), aniline Za (0.10 mmol), PdI_2 (10 mol%), L16 (11 mol%), CO (50 atm), THF (1.0 mL), rt, 72 h. Isolated yields.

the trace amount of H_2O played a vital role in the reaction. The reaction was significantly suppressed when anhydrous THF was used as the solvent, while a 95% yield of **3a** was obtained when 1.0 equiv of H_2O was employed as the additive (entries 2 and 3). The replacement of PdI₂ by Pd/C and HI resulted in **3a** in 81% yield (entry 4). And the reaction was completely suppressed by a base, such as Na₂CO₃ or K₂CO₃ (entries 5 and 6). These experimental results suggest that the Pd-catalyzed hydroaminocarbonylation reaction proceeded most likely through a palladium hydride pathway.

On the basis of the above preliminary observations and the known reports on Pd-catalyzed hydrocarbonylations, $^{7-11,20}$ a tentative mechanism is proposed in Scheme 2. Initially, a

Scheme 2. Tentative Reaction Mechanism



palladium hydride species A is generated from the reaction of PdI_2 , H_2O , and CO. Coordination and insertion of alkene 1 into palladium hydride A afford the alkyl-Pd intermediate B. The alkyl-Pd B undergoes CO coordination and insertion to give the acyl-Pd intermediate C. Finally, aminolysis of acyl-Pd C results in the desired amide and regenerates the active palladium hydride catalyst A.

To gain further insight into the catalytic cycle, deuteriumlabeling experiments were conducted under the standard conditions. First, when the deuterium-labeled $1a-D_2$ was used as the substrate and 1.0 equiv of H₂O was used as the additive,





H/D scrambling was not observed (Scheme 3a). This result suggested that the hydropalladation process from palladium hydride A to intermediate B is irreversible and should be the regio- and enantiodetermining step of the reaction. However, when the deuterium-labeled $2a-D_7$ (>98% D on nitrogen) was used as the substrate, an important deuterium loss was observed, even in the presence of 1.0 equiv of D₂O (Scheme 3b). This result indicated that a trace amount of active H (maybe in the form water) is still contained in the reaction. For comparison, the control experiments were carried out by using either $2a-D_7/H_2O(1:1)$ or $2a/D_2O(1:1)$ as the substrates (Scheme 3c,d). In both cases, similar results (20% D in $3a-D_1$) were obtained. These two experiments indicated that H/D exchange on aniline and water is fast under the conditions. Since these experiments were operated under identical conditions (Scheme 3b-d), we then concluded that the kinetic isotope effect (KIE) on the hydrogen of aniline was 3.33, thus indicating that aminolysis is probably the ratelimiting step of the reaction.

In summary, we have developed the first Pd-catalyzed asymmetric Markovnikov hydroaminocarbonylation of alkenes with anilines. A new catalytic system of PdI_2 -phosphoramidite ligand **L16** was discovered. The reaction proceeded under mild ambient conditions and exhibited good functional group compatibility. A diverse array of 2-substituted propanamides was obtained straightforwardly in high yields and enantio-selectivities, several of which could be easily converted to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Mechanistic investigations revealed that the reaction proceeds through a palladium-hydride mechanism, and the hydropalladation is irreversible and is the regio- and enantiodetermining step, while aminolysis is probably the rate-limiting step. Further scope and mechanistic studies of such reactions are underway and will be reported in due course.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/jacs.0c11249.

Experimental procedure and characterization data for all the products (PDF) Crystallographic data for **3p** (CIF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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