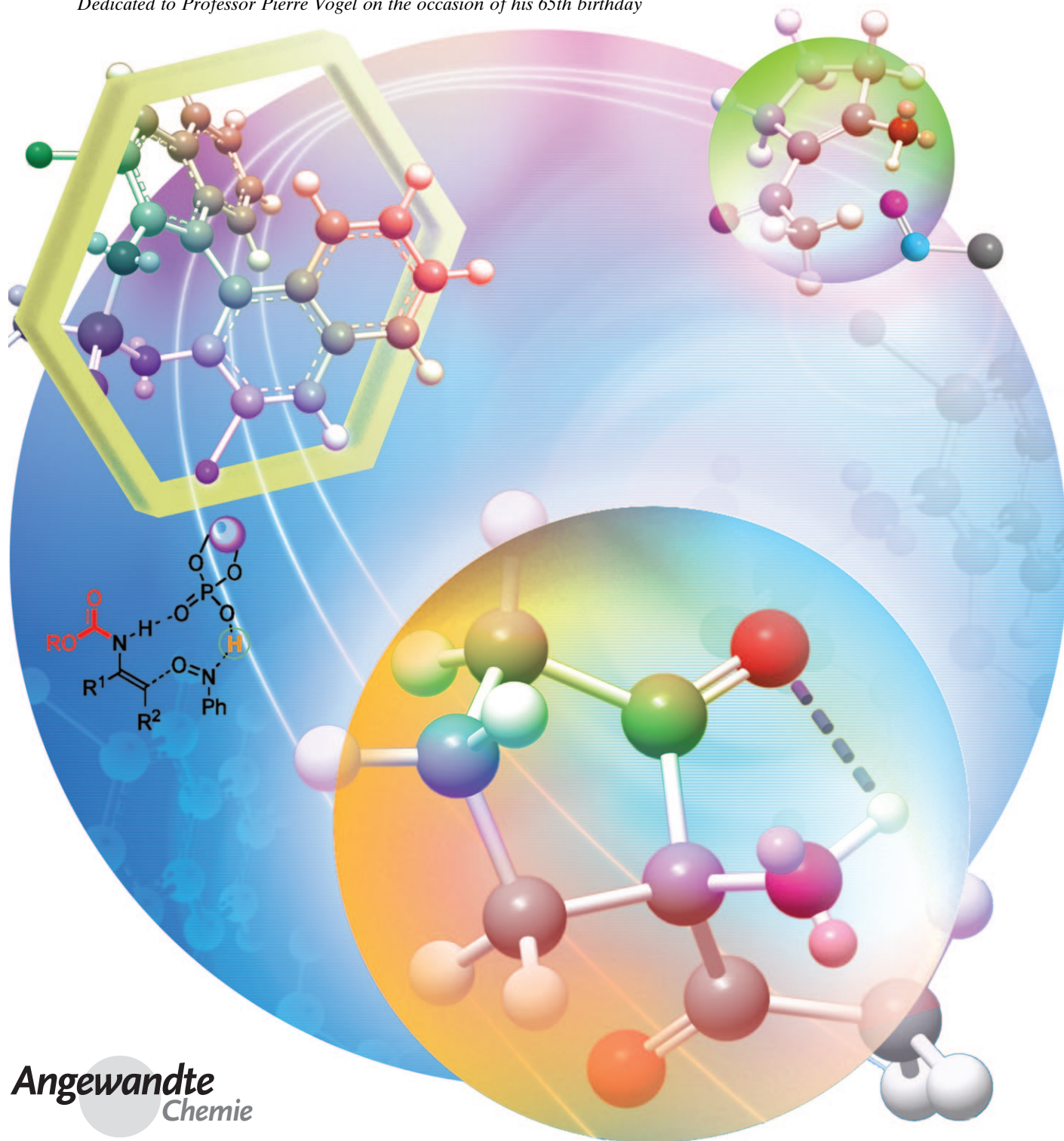


Chiral Brønsted Acid Catalyzed Enantioselective α -Aminoxylation of Enecarbamates**

Min Lu, Yunpeng Lu, Di Zhu, Xiaofei Zeng, Xinsheng Li, and Guofu Zhong*

Dedicated to Professor Pierre Vogel on the occasion of his 65th birthday



α -Hydroxy carbonyl compounds are key motifs encountered throughout natural products and pharmaceuticals; thus, the preparation of chiral α -hydroxy ketones has been of great interest and has motivated a tremendous wealth of strategies for their synthesis.^[1] Catalytic asymmetric α -aminoxylation reactions^[2–6] are one of the most facile and conventional synthetic methods towards chiral α -hydroxy ketones. However, despite considerable efforts in the area of α -aminoxylation, so far the substrate scopes have been limited to aldehydes,^[4] cyclic ketones,^[5] and β -dicarbonyl compounds.^[6] The use of linear ketones resulted in significant decrease in both the reactivity and selectivity,^[7] while no examples with aromatic ketones have been documented, possibly because of the severe steric hindrance which strongly inhibited the covalent binding of the catalyst.

To address these challenges, enecarbamate **1** was chosen as an activated ketone nucleophile (Figure 1);^[8] we envisioned that in the presence of an electron-withdrawing carbamate group (TS), instead of an electron-donating pyrrolidine moiety (used in proline catalysis, TS*), the undesired N-addition pathway might be suppressed. The fact that both the *E* and *Z* isomers of enecarbamates can be conveniently prepared provides additional flexibility for this approach.^[9] Meanwhile, chiral Brønsted acids^[10,11] would be

attractive alternatives for overcoming the limitations of proline catalysis in α -aminoxylation reactions, as selective protonation of the basic nitrogen of nitrosobenzene should be realized by a judicious choice of stronger acid (TS).^[12] However, no efficient C–O bond formation of enecarbamates has been reported, despite recent successes in the catalytic asymmetric aza-ene reactions of enecarbamates with aldehydes^[13] and imines.^[14] In a continuation of our long standing work in aminoxylation chemistry,^[15] we recently discovered that highly enantioselective α -hydroxylation of β -dicarbonyl compounds can be achieved through activation of nitroso compounds with binol-derived phosphoric acids.^[6] To further explore the extent of this novel activation mode, herein we describe the first chiral-phosphoric-acid-catalyzed α -aminoxylation of ene-carbamates, and its one-pot application leading to direct access of optically pure α -hydroxy ketones, β -amino alcohols, and oxazolidinones.

On the basis of our initial DFT calculations (Figure 2),^[16] it was found that with a stronger Brønsted acid, such as

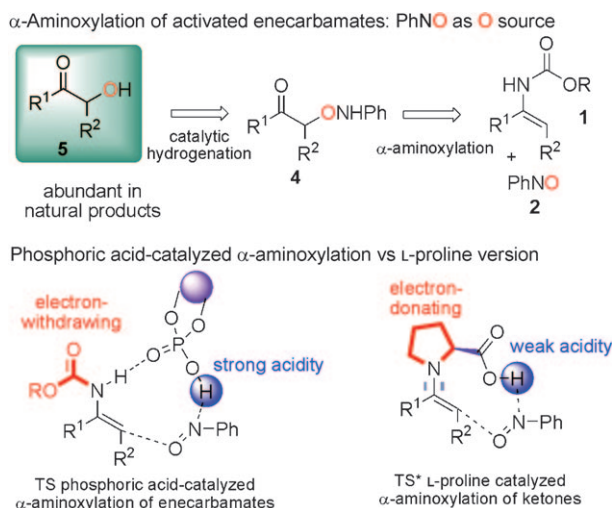


Figure 1. Projected synthesis of chiral α -hydroxy ketones **5**.

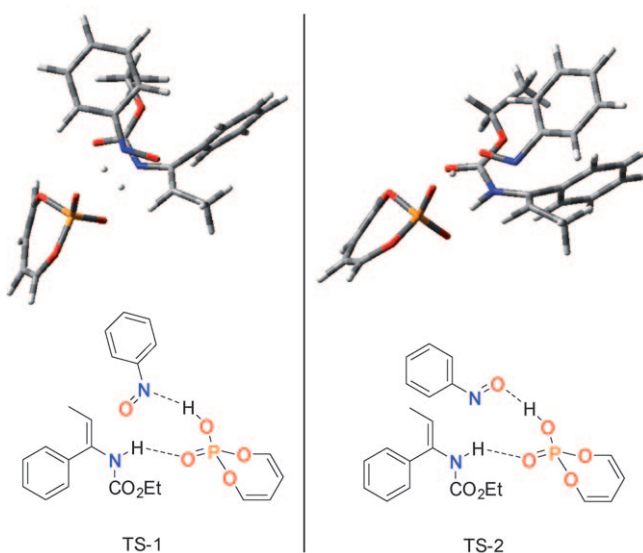


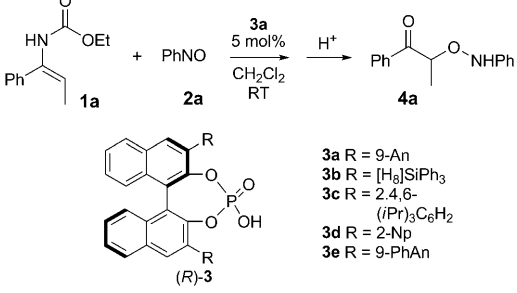
Figure 2. DFT-calculated lowest-energy transition state for the O-selective (TS-1) and N-selective (TS-2) pathways.^[16]

phosphoric acid, as the catalyst, the O-selective pathway (TS-1) would be favored by 2.91 kcal mol^{−1}; we proposed that the utility of this activation mode would rely on the identification of a phosphoric acid **3** with suitable R groups that could induce high levels of enantiocontrol in the C–O bond-forming step. To test this concept, we carried out the reaction using 1.1 equivalents of enecarbamate **1a** and nitrosobenzene **2a** (Table 1).^[16] As expected, 5 mol % of phosphoric acid (*R*)-**3a** effectively promoted the reaction in dichloromethane at room temperature within 5 minutes (Table 1, entry 1). The reaction can be monitored easily by observation of its color change from green to orange, and, after hydrolysis, furnished the desired product **4a** in 88 % yield with almost complete O-selectivity (O/N > 95:5), accompanied by promising enantioselectivity (90:10 e.r.).

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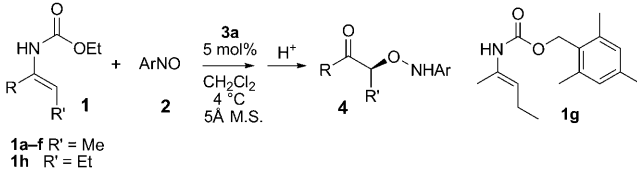
Table 1: Screening of reaction conditions.^[a]


Entry	Solvent	t [h]	O/N ^[b]	Yield [%] ^[c]	e.r. ^[d]
1	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.1	> 95:5	88	90:10
2	toluene	0.1	94:6	85	88:12
3	THF	12	< 5:95	-	-
4 ^[e]	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.2	> 95:5	90	92:8
5 ^[f]	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.5	> 95:5	85	90:10
6 ^[e,g]	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.2	> 95:5	95	97:3
7 ^[e,g,h]	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.5	> 95:5	90	96:4
8 ^[e,g,i]	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.1	< 5:95	-	-

[a] For screening details, see the Supporting Information. [b] Determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy. [c] Yield of isolated product. [d] Determined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. [e] Reaction conducted at 4 °C. [f] Reaction conducted at -20 °C. [g] 5 Å M.S. were added. [h] 2 mol % of **3a** was used. [i] (Z)-**1a** was used instead of (E)-**1a**. An = anthryl, Np = naphthyl, THF = tetrahydrofuran.

Aromatic solvents delivered similar results (Table 1, entry 2); however, when ethereal solvents were used, N-addition was favored (Table 1, entry 3, O/N < 5:95). Notably, although a prolonged reaction time was required at 4 °C, an efficient catalytic performance with higher e.r. was observed (Table 1, entry 4, e.r. 92:8); further lowering the temperature to -20 °C gave rise to diminished enantiocontrol (Table 1, entry 5). Remarkably, both the yields and optical purity were improved in the presence of 5 Å molecular sieves (Table 1, entry 6; 95 % yield, e.r. 97:3). Catalyst loadings as low as 2 mol % could be utilized without compromising the reactivity and selectivity (Table 1, entry 7). It is also noteworthy that when changing the enecarbamate geometry from E to Z, a dramatic inversion in O/N selectivity was observed (Table 1, entry 8).^[17]

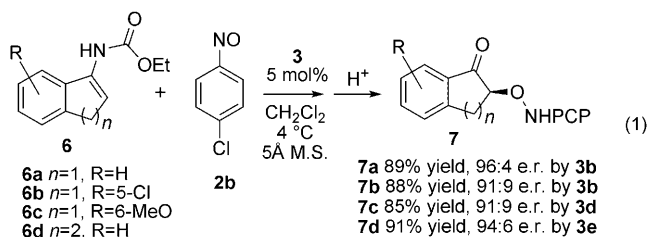
Experiments that probed the scope of this novel transformation under optimized conditions are summarized in Table 2. A broad spectrum of nitrosoarenes could be employed in the reaction to afford the desired products in excellent yields and high enantioselectivities (Table 2, entries 1–7), with the exception of 4-nitrosotoluene (Table 2, entry 4) in which N–O bond heterolysis was observed after the initial aminoxylation.^[6] Enecarbamates derived from aromatic ketones that have substituents with various electronic and steric properties were also found to efficiently react with 4-chloronitrosobenzene (**2b**), and the products were obtained in high enantioselectivities (Table 2, entries 8–12). For aliphatic-ketone-derived enecarbamate, the use of an ethyl carbamate group resulted in poor enantioselectivity (70:30 e.r.); nevertheless, following systematic modification of the carbamate group as well as fine tuning of the catalyst,^[16] we found that the mesitylmethyl group was able to provide

Table 2: Substrate scope of the chiral phosphoric acid catalyzed α-aminoxylation of enecarbamates.^[a]


Entry	R	Ar	Yield [%] ^[b]	e.r. ^[c]
1	Ph (1a)	Ph (2a)	95 (4a)	97:3
2	Ph (1a)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	95 (4b)	98:2
3	Ph (1a)	p-BrC ₆ H ₄ (2c)	93 (4c)	98:2
4	Ph (1a)	p-Tol (2d)	44 (5)	97:3
5	Ph (1a)	m-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2e)	91 (4d)	98:2
6	Ph (1a)	o-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2f)	89 (4e)	96:4
7	Ph (1a)	p-CO ₂ MeC ₆ H ₄ (2g)	98 (4f)	97:3
8	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (1b)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	96 (4g)	98.5:1.5
9	p-MeOC ₆ H ₄ (1c)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	93 (4h)	96.5:3.5
10	p-Tol (1d)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	95 (4i)	97:3
11	m-Tol (1e)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	90 (4j)	96:4
12	o-Tol (1f)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	89 (4k)	96:4
13 ^[d]	Me (1g)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	90 (4l)	90:10
14	Ph (1h)	p-ClC ₆ H ₄ (2b)	92 (4m)	98:2

[a] For detailed reaction conditions, see the Supporting Information. [b] Yield of isolated product. [c] Determined by HPLC or GC analysis on a chiral stationary phase. [d] 10 mol % of **3c** was used.

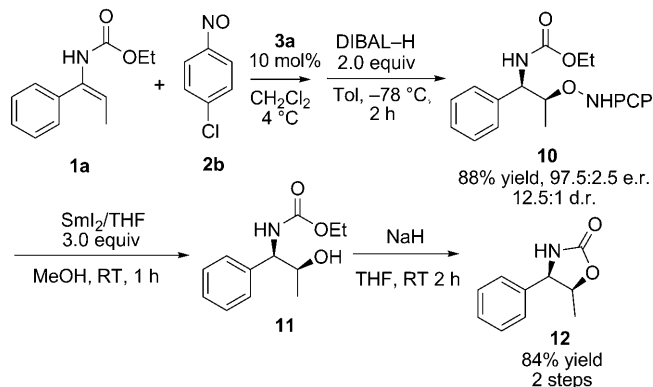
enough steric bulkiness when subjected to the chiral environment created by catalyst **3c**, and the product **4l** was isolated in 90 % yield with 90:10 e.r. (Table 2, entry 13). Furthermore, the more-challenging enecarbamates derived from indanones and tetralones could also successfully undergo α-aminoxylation to give α-oxygenated products in good yields and ee values [Eq. (1)], although specific catalyst was needed for



each substrate. The absolute configuration of **4a**, **7a**, and **7d** were determined to be S after catalytic hydrogenation to convert them to the corresponding α-hydroxy ketones^[16] and comparing the optical rotation with literature.^[18] The stereochemistry of other products was tentatively assumed by analogy.

To highlight the synthetic utility of this procedure, we present preliminary results for the one-pot synthesis of orthogonally protected β-amino alcohols and a straightforward access to cis-oxazolidinones. The β-amino alcohol moiety is found in a wide range of biologically active natural products,^[19] and is also well-recognized in asymmetric synthesis, as many chiral auxiliaries and ligands contain this

substructure.^[20] Specifically, after the α -aminoxylation of **1a** had been completed, reduction of the crude product with DIBAL (diisobutylaluminum hydride) at -78°C efficiently furnished the protected β -amino alcohol **10** in 88% yield and 12.5:1 d.r. (Scheme 1). After a SmI_2 -promoted N–O bond heterolysis, *cis*-oxazolidinone was obtained using a reported procedure.^[21]



Scheme 1. Synthesis of β -amino alcohol and *cis*-oxazolidinone.

In conclusion, we have reported a facile, practically appealing, highly enantioselective Brønsted acid-catalyzed α -aminoxylation of enecarbamates. This procedure considerably extend the substrate scope for the α -aminoxylation reaction to linear and aromatic ketones, allowing convergent and stereoselective access to valuable α -hydroxy ketones, β -amino alcohols, and *cis*-oxazolidinones in their enantiopure form. This discovery also provides mechanistic insights into the N/O selectivity of α -aminoxylation. Further applications of this activation mode to other enantioselective reactions are currently underway.

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