

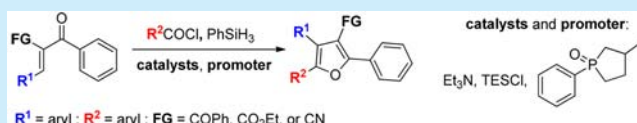
Synthesis of Functionalized Furans via Chemoselective Reduction/Wittig Reaction Using Catalytic Triethylamine and Phosphine

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S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: An efficient protocol for the synthesis of highly functionalized furans via intramolecular Wittig reaction has been developed using catalytic amounts of phosphine and triethylamine. Silyl chloride served as the initial promoter to activate the phosphine oxide. Reduction of the activated phosphine oxide by hydrosilane resulted in generation of phosphine, while decomposition of Et₃N·HCl resulted in regeneration of base, which mediated formation of phosphorus ylide. Remarkably, the in situ generated byproduct, Et₃N·HCl, also catalyzes reduction of phosphine oxide.

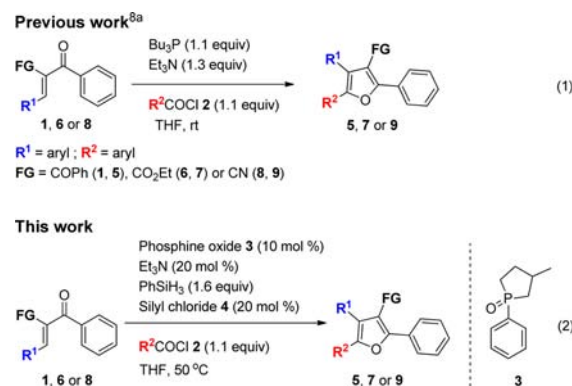


Phosphine-mediated transformations^{1–4} are ubiquitous in synthetic chemistry and have a vast impact on this field. Although these applications are very useful, the in situ generated stoichiometric amount of phosphine oxide byproduct makes the purification process difficult and poses environmental hazards, rendering them less practical on an industrial scale. In recent years, protocols involving recyclable usage of phosphine reagents have attracted much attention.⁵ Hydrosilane has potential for phosphine oxide reduction, which makes this concept possible.⁶ Each of these earlier protocols has its own limitations, such as use of excess base or harsh reaction conditions which do not allow substrates that are sensitive toward such conditions to be employed. The challenges in this design are achieving chemoselective reduction of phosphine oxide without affecting the accompanying reagents or substrates⁵ and forming byproducts, serving as the catalyst/cocatalyst in a multistep reaction to benefit the main reaction course⁷ or are orthogonal.

We previously reported the synthesis of furans via intramolecular Wittig reaction by treating simple Michael acceptors with tributylphosphine, triethylamine, and acyl chlorides **2** under mild conditions (Scheme 1, eq 1).⁸ Here, we report a novel protocol for the synthesis of these furans utilizing a catalytic amount of phosphine reagent (Scheme 1, eq 2). Notably, silyl chloride and the in situ generated byproduct, triethylammonium chloride, are found to accelerate the reduction of phosphine oxide.

We first selected the α -cyano-substituted chalcone **1a** and 4-chlorobenzoyl chloride (**2a**) as the substrates to test the feasibility of the catalytic Wittig reaction (Table 1). To promote the phosphine oxide reduction and in situ generate phosphorus ylide, more than 2 equiv of base was used (Table 1, entries 1–3). Although the reaction did not work well at 30 °C, mild heating to 50 °C improved the yield slightly (Table 1, entries 1 and 2). While excess **2a** was utilized, a higher yield of adduct **5aa** was obtained (Table 1, entry 3). Decreasing the amount of Et₃N could promote the reaction even better (Table 1, entry 4). It is

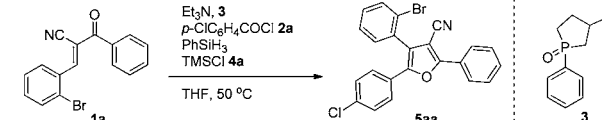
Scheme 1. Synthesis of Highly Functionalized Furans via Intramolecular Catalytic Wittig Reaction



possible that **2a** is reduced into the corresponding aldehyde and that Michael acceptor **1a** is reduced under these reaction conditions.^{7d,9} We also assumed that the silyl alcohol formed in the reaction would trap the acyl chloride, and use of excess **2a** was required. Therefore, **4a** was chosen as the trapping reagent for in situ generated silyl alcohol and thereby reduced the need for excess **2a**. **4a** and **2a** (1.1 equiv, Table 1, entry 5) provided results similar to that in Table 1, entry 4. Even a catalytic amount of Et₃N could facilitate the reaction (Table 1, entry 6). Increasing the amount of phenylsilane improved the yield (Table 1, entry 7). We found that the reaction still performed well by decreasing the loading of **4a** to 50 mol % (Table 1, entry 8). We employed triethylsilyl chloride (**4b**) instead of volatile **4a** to further reduce the loading of silyl chloride (Table 1, entries 9 and 10). The best result was afforded using 20 mol % of **4b** and 1.6 equiv of phenylsilane (Table 1, entry 10). Good results with catalytic

Received: June 19, 2016

Published: July 19, 2016

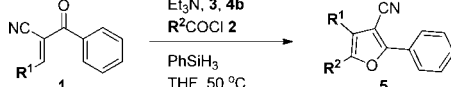
Table 1. Optimization of Reaction Conditions^a


entry	Et ₃ N (equiv)	PhSiH ₃ (equiv)	4a (equiv)	2a (equiv)	time (h)	5aa, yield (%) ^b
1 ^c	2.7	1.0		1.1	24	14
2	2.7	1.0		1.1	14	26
3	2.7	1.0		2.2	14	68
4	1.1	1.0		2.2	8	68
5	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	13	65
6	0.2	1.0	1.1	1.1	12	52
7	0.2	1.4	1.1	1.1	12	67
8	0.2	1.4	0.5	1.1	12	58
9	0.2	1.4	0.2 ^d	1.1	6	59
10	0.2	1.6	0.2 ^d	1.1	5	84

^aReaction carried out using **1a** (0.3 mmol), Et₃N, **2a**, **3** (10 mol %), phenylsilane, and **4a** in dry THF (1.5 mL) under Ar atmosphere. ^bIsolated yield. ^c30 °C. ^d**4b** was used instead of **4a**.

amounts of **4b** indicate the role of silyl chloride as a promoter for the reduction of phosphine oxide instead of acting as a trapping reagent for the in situ generated silyl alcohol, as assumed earlier.¹⁰

With the optimized conditions, the protocol was first investigated using different α -cyano-substituted chalcones **1** and **2** to synthesize various furan adducts **5**. First, **1a** was examined with a variety of **2** (Table 2, entries 1–8). The effect of

Table 2. Synthesis of Furan Derivatives **5** from **1**^a


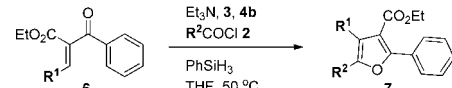
entry	R ¹	R ²	time (h)	5, yield (%) ^b
1	1a , 2-BrPh	2a , 4-ClPh	5	5aa , 84
2	2-BrPh	2b , 3-ClPh	6	5ab , 73
3	2-BrPh	2c , 2-ClPh	6	5ac , 61
4	2-BrPh	2d , 4-OMePh	12	5ad , 70
5	2-BrPh	2e , 4-MePh	12	5ae , 77
6	2-BrPh	2f , Ph	12	5af , 80
7	2-BrPh	2g , Cy	20	5ag , 33
8	2-BrPh	2h , ^t Pr	14	5ah , 66
9	1b , 4-BrPh	4-ClPh	6	5ba , 85
10	1c , 2-ClPh	4-ClPh	6	5ca , 94
11	1d , 4-NO ₂ Ph	4-ClPh	4	5da , 98
12	1e , Ph	4-ClPh	12	5ea , 93
13	1f , 2-thienyl	4-ClPh	6	5fa , 89
14	1g , 4-OMePh	4-ClPh	18	5ga , 63

^aReaction was carried out using **1** (0.3 mmol), Et₃N (20 mol %), **2** (1.1 equiv), **3** (10 mol %), phenylsilane (1.6 equiv), and **4b** (20 mol %) in dry THF (1.5 mL) under Ar atmosphere. ^bIsolated yield.

steric hindrance could be clearly observed in with *para*-, *meta*-, and *ortho*-chlorobenzoyl chlorides in the decreasing yields (Table 2, entries 1–3). Absence of an electron-withdrawing group or presence of an electron-donating group reduced the reactivity of acyl chloride (Table 2, entries 4–6). An aliphatic functionality as R² could also be introduced successfully under the reaction conditions, providing **5ag** or **5ah** in 33 or 66% yield,

respectively (Table 2, entries 7 and 8). The reaction also proceeded well with different R¹ substituents (Table 2, entries 9–13) except for **1g**, where **5ga** was obtained in moderate yield (Table 2, entry 14).

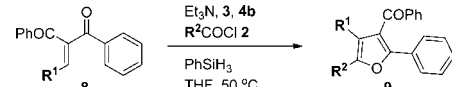
This protocol worked well with different substrates **6** bearing an ester functionality to afford furans **7** under the same conditions (Table 3). A variety of desired products **7** were

Table 3. Synthesis of Furan Derivatives **7** from **6**^a


entry	R ¹	R ²	time (h)	7, yield (%) ^b
1	6a , 4-NO ₂ Ph	2a , 4-ClPh	9	7aa , 85
2	4-NO ₂ Ph	2b , 3-ClPh	7	7ab , 92
3	4-NO ₂ Ph	2c , 2-ClPh	9	7ac , 88
4	4-NO ₂ Ph	2d , 4-OMePh	18	7ad , 62
5	4-NO ₂ Ph	2e , 4-MePh	15	7ae , 73
6	4-NO ₂ Ph	2f , Ph	12	7af , 82
7	4-NO ₂ Ph	2i , 4-NO ₂ Ph	9	7ai , 91
8	4-NO ₂ Ph	2j , 2-furyl	15	7aj , 76
9	6b , 4-CNPh	4-ClPh	10	7ba , 90

^aReaction was carried out using **6** (0.3 mmol), Et₃N (20 mol %), **2** (1.1 equiv), **3** (10 mol %), phenylsilane (1.6 equiv), and **4b** (20 mol %) in dry THF (1.5 mL) under Ar atmosphere. ^bIsolated yield.

obtained in moderate to good yields. Even Michael acceptors **8** with additional ketone functionality were successfully employed in this new protocol, furnishing furans **9** in high yields (Table 4).

Table 4. Synthesis of Furan Derivatives **9** from **8**^a


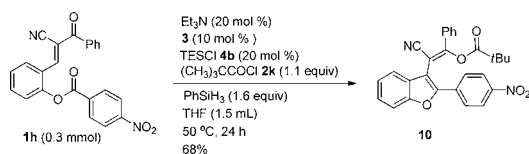
entry	R ¹	R ²	time (h)	9, yield (%) ^b
1	8a , 4-NO ₂ Ph	2a , 4-ClPh	10	9aa , 92
2	4-NO ₂ Ph	2b , 3-ClPh	10	9ab , 97
3	4-NO ₂ Ph	2c , 2-ClPh	10	9ac , 94
4	4-NO ₂ Ph	2d , 4-OMePh	10	9ad , 92
5	4-NO ₂ Ph	2f , Ph	10	9af , 91
6	4-NO ₂ Ph	2i , 4-NO ₂ Ph	10	9ai , 89
7	4-NO ₂ Ph	2j , 2-furyl	7	9aj , 89
8	8b , 3-NO ₂ Ph	4-ClPh	36	9ba , 97
9	8c , 2-NO ₂ Ph	4-ClPh	10	9ca , 90
10	8d , 2-thienyl	4-ClPh	24	9da , 85
11	8e , CO ₂ Et	4-ClPh	7	9ea , 99

^aReaction was carried out using **6** (0.3 mmol), Et₃N (20 mol %), **2** (1.1 equiv), **3** (10 mol %), phenylsilane (1.6 equiv), and **4b** (20 mol %) in dry THF (1.5 mL) under Ar atmosphere. ^bIsolated yield.

When the reaction was carried out with **1h** and sterically congested **2k**, the chemoselective Wittig reaction took place as in our earlier studies^{8b} to furnish **10** in 66% yield (Scheme 2).

To understand the exact role of each reagent in our protocol, we conducted a series of control experiments for the reduction of **3** (Table 5). During the optimization of our protocol (Table 1), it was evident that Et₃N and the in situ generated Et₃N·HCl could play an important role in the phosphine oxide reduction. Hence, we monitored the progress of phosphine oxide reduction using different ratios of Et₃N and Et₃N·HCl that would account for 2

Scheme 2. Synthesis of the Functionalized Benzofuran 10

Table 5. Control Experiments for Reduction of Phosphine Oxide 3^a

entry	Et ₃ N (equiv)	Et ₃ N·HCl (equiv)	temp (°C)	yield (%) ^b
1	2.0	0.0	30	33
2	0.0	2.0	30	0
3	0.2	1.8	30	0
4	1.8	0.2	30	42
5	0.0	2.0	50	73
6 ^c	2.0	0.0	30	70
7 ^c	2.0	0.0	50	82 ^d
8 ^{c,e}	2.0	0.0	50	0

^aReaction was carried out using 3 (0.2 mmol), phenylsilane (18 equiv), Et₃N, and Et₃N·HCl in dry THF (1.0 mL) under Ar atmosphere. ^bDetermined by ³¹P NMR analysis of the crude reaction mixture. ^c4b (2 equiv) was added. ^d2 h. ^eP(O)Bu₃ was used instead of 3.

equiv compared to 3. At 30 °C, a catalytic amount of Et₃N·HCl accelerated the rate of reduction (Table 5, entries 1 and 4). Reduction was very slow in the absence of Et₃N or with a catalytic amount of Et₃N, even when a stoichiometric amount of Et₃N·HCl was employed (Table 5, entries 2 and 3). Reduction of 3 was also efficient solely with Et₃N·HCl at 50 °C (Table 5, entry 5). This result indicates that, under the mild heating condition, a portion of HCl can escape from the system to regenerate Et₃N from Et₃N·HCl for the reduction of phosphine oxide.¹¹ Moreover, 4b afforded a better result (Table 5, entries 1 and 6). Silyl chloride species could accelerate the reduction by activation of 3.¹⁰ A combined effect of 4b and a higher temperature was observed in Table 5, entry 7, which gave the best result. We utilized the conditions in Table 5, entry 7, to carry out the reduction of tributylphosphine oxide (Table 5, entry 8). No reduction of phosphine oxide was observed in this case. This shows the advantage of using 3 rather than P(O)Bu₃ in our catalytic system.

To study the possible side reactions of acyl chloride in the reduction process (which used excess acyl chloride during the initial optimization of the catalytic Wittig reaction), we exposed 2a to our reduction conditions (Table 6). No reduction of acyl chloride was observed in the absence of phosphine oxide (Table 6, entry 1). In the presence of 3, considerable reduction of 2a was observed at 30 °C (Table 6, entry 2). The efficiency of acyl chloride reduction increased at higher temperature (Table 6, entry 3) or in the presence of TESCI (Table 6, entry 4), in which case, the reduced phosphine would be the dominant promoter rather than the initial phosphine oxide. Even P(O)Bu₃, which cannot be reduced to phosphine under these reaction conditions, could bring about the transformation (Table 6, entry 5; Table 5, entry 8), thereby indicating that phosphine oxide with silane could also reduce acid chloride. Although it was reported previously that phosphine can mediate the reduction of acyl

Table 6. Control Experiments To Test the Possibility of Reducing 2a^a

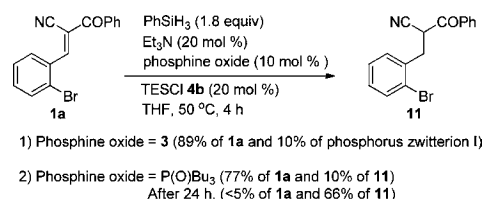
entry	phosphine oxide	temp	time (h)	yield (%) ^b
1		30	6	0 ^c
2 ^d	3	30	4 (24) ^e	1 (22) ^e
3 ^d	3	50	4	66
4	3	50	4	74
5	(O)PBU ₃	50	4	41

^aReaction was carried out using 2a (0.2 mmol), phosphine oxide (0.2 mmol), phenylsilane (18 equiv), and Et₃N (2 equiv) in dry THF (1.0 mL) under Ar atmosphere. ^bNMR yield. ^cNo conversion of 2a. ^dWithout 4b. ^eNMR yield at corresponding time is shown in parentheses.

chlorides to aldehydes,⁹ phosphine oxide could assist in this reduction, which has never been reported to the best of our knowledge. Our optimized conditions (Table 1) ensured that reduction of phosphine oxide 3 was highly efficient, and the generated phosphine was immediately trapped by 1, thereby preventing reduction of 2 by either 3 or phosphine, thus allowing us to use only 1.1 equiv of 2.

In the absence of 2, 1a was examined for its susceptibility toward reduction under our optimized reaction conditions (Scheme 3). When 3 was employed, no formation of reduced 11

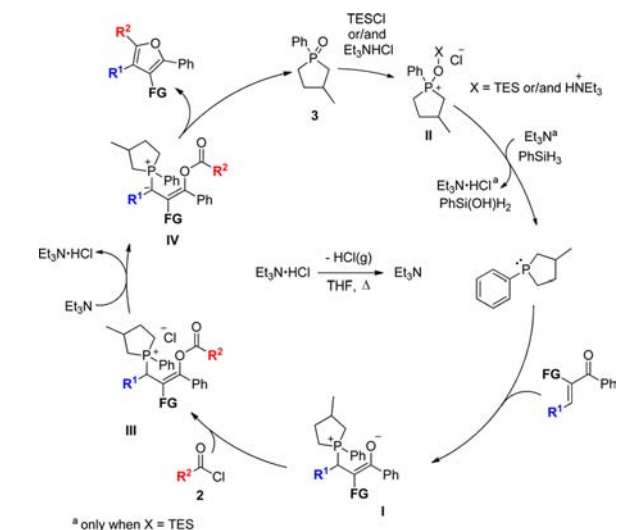
Scheme 3. Control Experiments To Test Reduction of 1a



was observed due to the efficient reduction of 3 and subsequent generation of expected I. In the presence of P(O)Bu₃ (which cannot be reduced to PBU₃ under the reaction conditions), 11 was obtained in 10% yield within 4 h. When the reaction was prolonged for 24 h, further reduction of 1a took place to furnish 11 in 66% yield. This indicates that if the phosphine oxide is not efficiently reduced to phosphine, it can bring about reduction of 1, which would eventually result in the lower furan adduct yield. Our optimized conditions ensured that TESCI significantly activated 3, which was efficiently reduced into corresponding phosphine, preventing the reduction of 1.

A plausible reaction mechanism is proposed in Scheme 4. First, 4b reacts with the 3 to afford intermediate II.^{10,12} Reduction of 3 into phosphine by phenylsilane in the presence of Et₃N takes place. Michael addition of phosphine to the Michael acceptor provides the zwitterionic intermediate I. Subsequently, I undergoes O-acylation with 2 to afford phosphonium chloride III and is in situ converted into phosphorus ylide IV after deprotonation by Et₃N. Finally, the furan adduct is obtained via intramolecular Wittig reaction with regeneration of 3. Notably, in addition to 4b (which participates in the first catalytic turn of phosphine oxide reduction), in situ generated byproduct, Et₃N·HCl, catalyzes the reduction of 3 in the succeeding catalytic turns. Et₃N is regenerated by the elimination of HCl(g) from Et₃N·HCl in THF at increased reaction temperature. The

Scheme 4. Plausible Reaction Mechanism in the Presence of Catalytic Amounts of Et_3N , 3, and 4b



success of this catalytic reaction cycle relies on the extent of chemoselectivity accomplished at two stages of the cycle via (i) efficient reduction of 3, thereby preventing the reduction of 1 and 2 catalyzed by 3, and (ii) chemoselective addition of generated phosphine onto 1 rather than 2 (Table 6, Scheme 3), leading to efficient generation of furans.

In summary, we developed a novel protocol to synthesize highly functionalized furans utilizing catalytic amounts of phosphine oxide and Et_3N under mild conditions. The concept of recyclable Et_3N was employed for the first time in a catalytic Wittig reaction. An unprecedented activation of phosphine oxide by silyl chloride and $\text{Et}_3\text{N}\cdot\text{HCl}$ for its highly chemoselective reduction in the presence of acyl chloride and electron-deficient olefins was achieved. This protocol could prove to be significant on an industrial scale as it averts the need for using stoichiometric amounts of phosphine and base. Related work utilizing other functionalized substrates is underway in our laboratory, and the results will be published in due course.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.orglett.6b01781.

Results of the mechanism study, experimental procedures, characterization data, and spectra for all compounds (PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Republic of China (MOST 104-2113-M-003-002-MY3) for financial support.

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- (11) During the reaction progress, corrosion of the needle attached to the argon inlet was observed, which also indicates release of HCl.
- (12) For the detailed experimental study on phosphine oxide reduction, see the Supporting Information.