Stereoconvergent Generation of a Contrasteric syn-Bicyclopropylidene $(= syn-Cyclopropy$ lidenecyclopropane) by Stille-Like Coupling

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Stereoisomerically pure *endo-* and *exo-7-halo-7-(trimethylstannyl)benzonorcar-3-enes (= endo- and* exo -(1-halo-1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalen-1-yl)trimethylstannane) 4 and 6 were selectively obtained by lithium–tin or magnesium–tin transmetalation in good yields (Scheme 2 and 3). The reaction of these compounds with copper(I) thiophene-2-carboxylate (CuTC) produced in both cases the corresponding C_s -symmetric bicyclopropylidene (=cyclopropylidenecyclopropane) syn-1, a single diastereoisomer (Schemes 5 and 6). The structure of syn-1 was undoubtedly elucidated by X-ray single crystal diffraction. The coupling mechanism of the carbenoid cyclopropane is discussed (Scheme 7).

Introduction. – Bicyclopropylidenes (= cyclopropylidenecyclopropanes) display a wide reactivity, ranging from the expected reactions of a tetrasubstituted olefin with electrophiles to the intriguing cascade-reaction recently reported by *de Meijere* and coworkers. [1]. Many procedures for the preparation and derivatization of bicyclopropylidenes are reported [1][2], including coupling of carbenes generated in situ from gemminally dihalo-substituted cyclopropanes [3], which, in turn, can be obtained by dihalocarbene insertion in C=C bonds. The research groups have, for a long time, been involved in the study of coupling reactions promoted by copper salts [4], and recently our attention focused on the masked carbene functionality of gemminally-bromo(trimethylstannyl)-substituted cyclopropanes. In this article, we describe an efficient and highly stereoselective synthetic methodology for the preparation of the contrasteric $syn-1a,1'a,2,2',7,7',7a,7'a-octahydro-1,1'-bi[cyclopropa[b]naphthalenylidene] (syn-1)¹$ (Fig. 1). This compound has been previously synthesized by *Banwell* and co-workers, as a mixture of syn- and anti-1 in 7 and 11% yield, respectively [5].

¹) The terms *syn/anti* in names and key numbers mean that a compound has a cage-like/stair-like overall gross structure, cf. Fig. 1.

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Fig. 1. The two possible isomers of bicyclopropylidene 1

Results and Discussion. – The starting material 3 was readily obtained in two steps from naphthalene, which was selectively reduced at the 1,4 positions [6] followed by dibromocyclopropanation with tribromomethane and potassium tert-butoxide (Scheme 1) [7].

Although the formation of bicyclopropylidenes can be accomplished by the use of simple metalating agents [8], the yields and diastereoselectivities of these reactions are not very good $\lceil 3b \rceil \lceil 3i \rceil \lceil 9 \rceil$. The use of bromostannanes with copper(I) as promoter of the coupling reaction can provide milder conditions with an efficiency improvement. When 7,7-dibromobenzonorcar-3-ene $(=1,1$ -dibromo-1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalene; 3) was treated with BuLi at -78° , and the resulting anion was quenched with chlorotrimethyltstannane, the *endo*-trimethylstanyl derivative *endo-*4²) was isolated as the sole product in 90% yield (Scheme 2). The configuration was confirmed by a NOESY experiment: the scalar correlation between the Me groups and the endo benzylic H-atoms was in good agreement with distances observed in minimized models (MacSpartan Plus, semi-empirical, PM3 basis set), which resulted in 2.32 and 4.29 Å for the *endo-* and *exo-*(trimethylstannyl) derivatives, respectively. The remarkable diastereoselectivity observed with substrate 3 matched the previously reported results obtained with 2-oxa-7,7-dibromonorcarane [10], 7,7-dibromonorcarane [9d] [11], and 7,7-dibromonorcar-2-ene [12].

²) The terms *endolexo* in names and key numbers mean that the senior of the geminal substitutents is on the concave/convex side of the molecule, cf. Schemes 2 – 4 and 7.

However, the use of Mg as the metalating agent in the reaction of dibromonorcar-3 ene derivative 3 with Me₃SnCl produced a complex mixture consisting of *exo*-stannyl isomer exo-4 as the major product along with products similar to those obtained by treatment of 7,7-dibromonorcarane with an organomagnesium reagent (Scheme 3) [13]. The endo-product endo-4 was formed in 22% yield, the reduction products endoand exo-5 in 3 and 2% yield, respectively, and the coupling product, syn- and anti-1 in 1 and 3% yield. Compound $exo-4$ was isolated as a mixture with $exo-6$; all attempts (chromatography, crystallization) to separate this mixture failed. However, the protodestannylation reaction of all stannylated products, i.e., of endo-4, exo-4, and $exo-6$, with $CF₃COOH$ resulted in the formation of the corresponding reduced products exo-5 [14], endo-5 [14], and endo-7 [15] which allowed us to characterize the isolated products (*Scheme 4*). The attribution of the configuration of the monohalosubstituted structures was also confirmed by the coupling constants between the Hatoms of the cyclopropane moieties $(J_{cis}$ was typically 8 Hz, while J_{trans} was typically 4 Hz) [16].

 $Copper(I)$ thiophene-2-carboxylate (CuTC) is a reagent successfully employed either for couplings between unsaturated halides and stannanes [17], or between two unsaturated halides [18] or stannanes [19]. Furthermore, it is one of the most efficient reagents for the preparation of benzocyclotrimers from vicinally-bromo(stannyl) substituted olefins [4] [20]. Treatment of endo-4 with a slight excess of CuTC in dry Nmethylpyrrolidin-2-one (NMP) at -20° afforded the syn-coupling product syn-1 as the sole isomer in 67% yield (*Scheme 5*). Careful analysis of the crude reaction mixture (1 H-NMR, GC/MS) did not reveal the formation of any trace of other products such as a trimer, which may be formed by further addition of the carbene to syn-1.

Scheme 4. Protodestannylation of the Halo(trimethylstannyl) Compounds exo-4, endo-4, and exo-6 to Confirm the Exact Configurations

Scheme 5. Reaction of endo-4 with Copper(I) Thiophene-2-carboxylate (CuTC) in N-Methylpyrrolidin-2-one (NMP)

The configuration of syn-1 was established by X-ray crystallography that revealed also peculiar and interesting structural features. The compound crystallized in a monoclinic centrosymmetric space group $P2₁/n$ with four molecules in the unit cell. The structure contains two $1a,2,7,7a$ -tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa $[b]$ naphthalene fragments connected by a C=C $(C(11) - C(12) = 1.302 \text{ A})$ bond. The tetrahydronaphthalene moieties are folded onto each other, as shown in the structure reported in Fig. 2. The interplanar and centroid-to-centroid distances between the cofacial pair of benzene moieties are 4.157(3) \AA and 4.247(3) \AA , respectively, and the dihedral angle between the planes is $17.7(2)^\circ$. The cyclohexene fragments are also partially folded along the $C(15)\cdots C(18)$ and $C(7)\cdots C(10)$ axis. The hinge angles between the cyclopropane C(15)–C(14)–C(13)–C(18) and C(7)–C(8)–C(9)–C(10) planes are 112.0(2)° and 112.3(1)^o, respectively. The molecular packing of syn-1 as viewed along the a-axis is shown in Fig. 2. Translation symmetry in the crystal structure may be easily seen in the unit cell along the diagonal axis.

Surprisingly, treatment of the mixture $exo-4/exo-6$ (ratio 4.2:1) with CuTC under the same reaction conditions afforded also formation of $syn-1$ as a major product (64%) beside the isomeric anti-1 (2%) (Scheme 6).

After having observed a strong selectivity in the coupling reaction of both substrates *exo*- and *endo*-4, we propose the following mechanism for the formation of the products. Copper-tin transmetalation is the most likely step to start the coupling process, as previously observed in the case of vicinally-bromo(stannyl)-substituted olefins [19]. In principle, the geminally subtituted-bromocuprates exo- and endo-8 can eliminate CuBr to afford a carbene, which may undergo the dimerization reaction.

Fig. 2. Molecular structure of syn-1 and molecular packing in syn-1 crystals viewed along the a-axis. Thermal ellipsoids are drawn at the 40% probability level. Arbitrary atom numbering.

However, in this case, a diastereoselectivity would not be expected. The fact that syn-1 (which is the more sterically congested isomer) is formed in the coupling reaction of endo-4 as the sole product indicates that a stepwise process is involved. We assume that a hetero-coupling between two molecules of endo-8 takes place to form endo-9 with a defined configuration by eliminating only one molecule of CuBr. Removal of a second molecule of CuBr then gives syn-1 with the expected configuration (Scheme 7).

In conclusion, the results show that endo-4 and exo-4/exo-6 undergo stereoselective reactions in which the Cu/Sn exchange is the preferred process. anti-Periplanar

Scheme 7. Formation Mechanism of the Major Product syn-1

elimination of CuBr or CuCl furnishes the corresponding coupling product syn-1 nearly as single diastereoisomer, where the configuration of the stannylated halo compounds determine the configuration of the coupling products. The present study represents a viable synthesis of the contrasteric bicyclopropylidene syn-1 and confirms the ability of CuTC to promote Sn-Sn (preferentially) coupling process.

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Experimental Part

General. All reactions were carried out under Ar and monitored by TLC and/or ¹H-NMR. All solvents were dried and distilled before use. Flash column chromatography (FC): silica gel (SiO₂, 60 mesh; Merck). TLC: Merck 0.2 mm silica gel 60 F_{254} on anal. aluminium plates. M.p.: uncorrected. ¹Hand ¹³C-NMR Spectra ³): Varian-400 or Bruker-400 spectrometer; δ in ppm rel. to Me₄Si as internal standard, J in Hz. All new compounds gave satisfactory elemental analyses.

endo-(1-Bromo-1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalen-1-yl)trimethylstannane (endo-4). To a soln. of dibromide 3 [7] (1.0 g, 3.31 mmol) in dry THF (10 ml) at -78° , 2.5m BuLi in hexanes $(1.32 \text{ ml}, 3.31 \text{ mmol})$ was added dropwise, and the resulting mixture was stirred for 1 h at -78° . Chlorotrimethylstannane (660 mg, 3.31 mmol) was added portionwise within 60 min. The mixture was stirred for 2 h at -78° . Then, the temp. was allowed to rise to r.t. overnight. The reaction was quenched with H₂O (50 ml), the mixture extracted with Et₂O (3×30 ml), the combined extract dried (MgSO₄) and concentrated, and the residue purified by FC (hexane): endo-4 (1.15 g, 90%). Colorless oil. IR (KBr): 3062, 3020, 2906, 2883, 1496, 1454, 1430, 1187, 1056, 1040, 773, 745. ¹ H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3): 7.16 – 7.01 $(AA'BB'$, 4 arom. H); 3.18 (br. d, A of AB, $J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = 17.3, 1 H-C(2)$, $1 H-C(7)$); 3.03 (br. d, B of AB, J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = 17.3, 1 H-C(2), 1 H-C(7)); 2.05 (br. d, $J(1a,2anti) = J(7a,7anti) = 3.5, H-C(1a), H-C(7a)); -0.04$ (s, Me₃Sn). ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 134.4; 130.6; 127.3; 32.4; 29.4; 28.3; - 5.3.

Mixture of exo- and endo- Φ exo- and endo- Φ /exo- Φ /syn- and anti-1. Mg (1.09 g, 44.90 mmol) was added to a soln. of dibromide $3(11.3 \text{ g}, 37.42 \text{ mmol})$ in dry THF (100 ml) at r.t. in an ultrasonic bath. Chlorotrimethylstannane (7.53 g, 37.79 mmol) was added portionwise. The mixture was stirred for 1 h at r.t. The reaction was quenched with sat. NH₄Cl soln. (95 ml) and the mixture extracted with Et₂O (3 \times 80 ml). The combined extract was dried (MgSO₄) and concentrated and the crude residue subjected to column chromatography (neutral Al₂O₃ (450 g) hexane): *endo-*4 (3.2 g, 22%; see above, *exo-*5 (167 mg, 2%), exo-4/exo-6 4.2 : 1 (7.35 g; by ¹HNMR: exo-**4** (6.07 g, 42%) and exo-**6** (1.28 g, 10%), endo-**5** (250 mg, 3%), syn-1 (53 mg, 1%; see below), and anti-1 (160 mg, 3%), in this order.

exo-1-Bromo-1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalene (exo-5): Colorless liquid. IR (KBr): 3021, 2888, 2833, 1455, 1323, 1282, 1217, 1024, 749, 675. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.14 (*AA'* of $AA'BB'$, 2 arom. H); 7.02 (BB' of $AA'BB'$, 2 arom. H); 3.15 (br. d, A of AB, J(2syn,2anti) = $J(7syn,7anti) = 15.8$, $1 H-C(2)$, $1 H-C(7)$; 3.06 (br. d, B of AB, $J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = 15.8$, $1 H-C(2), 1 H-C(7)); 2.63 (t, J(1,1a) = J(1,7a) = 3.0, H-C(1)); 1.77 (m, H-C(1a), H-C(7a)).$ ¹³C-NMR $(100 \text{ MHz}, \text{CDCl}_3)$: 134.0; 129.3; 126.8; 28.6; 22.0; 19.3. Anal. calc. for $C_{11}H_{11}Br$ (223.11): C 59.22, H 4.97; found: C 59.77, H 4.96.

exo-(1-Bromo-1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalen-1-yl)trimethylstannane (exo-4): From the mixture $exo-4/exo-6$ 4.2:1: ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.14–7.08 (*AA'BB'*, 4 arom. H); 3.21 (ddd, A of AB, $J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = 16.5, J(syn,1a) = J(7syn,7a) = 5.5, J(2syn,7a) =$ $J(7syn,1a) = 2.6, 1 H-C(2), 1 H-C(7)); 2.70$ (br. d, B of AB, $J(2syn, 2anti) = J(7syn, 7anti) = 16.5$, $1 H-C(2), 1 H-C(7)); 1.38$ $(m, H-C(1a), H-C(7a)); 0.19$ $(s, Me₃Sn).$ ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 136.4; 128.2; 125.6; 27.6; 24.9; 18.1; - 9.7.

exo-(1-Chloro-1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalen-1-yl)trimethylstannane (exo-6): From the mixture $exo-4/exo-6$ 4.2:1 (only non-overlapped signals): ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 3.12 (ddd, A of AB, $J(2syn, 2anti) = J(7syn, 7anti) = 16.5, J(2syn, 1a) = J(7syn, 7a) = 5.5, J(2syn, 7a) =$ $J(7syn,1a) = 2.7, 1 H-C(2); 1 H-C(7)); 2.68$ (br. d, B of AB, $J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = 16.5$) 1 H–C(2), 1 H–C(7)). ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 125.5; 37.2; 18.6; -10.1.

endo-1-Bromo-1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalene (endo-5): Colorless oil. IR (KBr): 3061, 3019, 2939, 2894, 2840, 1495, 1455, 1429, 1257, 743, 646. ¹ H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3):

³) The lable *syn* or *anti* refers to the position of a H-atom on the concave or convex side of a molecule.

7.16 – 7.11 ($AA'BB'$, 4 arom. H); 3.53 (t, $J(1,1a) = J(1,7a) = 7.5$, H-C(1); 3.21 (ddd, A of AB, $J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = 16.5, \quad J(2syn,1a) = J(7syn,7a) = 5.3, \quad J(2syn,7a) = J(7syn,1a) = 2.8,$ $1 H-C(2), 1 H-C(7))$; 2.68 (br. d, B of AB, J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = 16.5, 1 H–C(2), 1 H–C(7)); 1.55 (*m*, H–C(1a), H–C(7a)). ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 136.0; 128.5; 126.0; 33.6; 26.3; 14.5. Anal. calc. for $C_{11}H_{11}Br$: C 59.22, H 4.97; found: C 59.56, H 4.80.

anti-1a,1'a,2,2',7,7',7a,7'a-Octahydro-1,1'-bi[1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalenylidene] (=anti-1a,2,7,7a-Tetrahydro-1-(1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopenta[b]naphtalen-1-ylidene)-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphtha*lene*; *anti*-1)¹): Colorless crystals from CH₂Cl₂/hexane 1:3. M.p. 239–240° ([5]: M.p. 228–232°). IR (KBr): 2964, 2924, 2844, 1260, 1094, 1021, 864, 799, 748. ¹ H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl3): 7.06 – 6.95 $(AA'BB'$, 8 arom. H); 2.99 (*m*, 2 H–C(2), 2 H–C(2'), 2 H–C(7), 2 H–C(7')); 1.63 (*m*, H–C(1a), H-C(7a), H-C(1'a), H-C(7'a)). ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): 135.8; 128.7; 125.8; 118.0; 29.6; 14.4. Anal. calc. for $C_{22}H_{20}$: C 92.91, H 7.09; found: C 92.89, H, 6.27.

 $syn-Ia,1'a,2,2',7,7',7a,7'a$ -Octahydro-1,1'-bi[1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalenylidene] (=syn-1a,2,7,7a-Tetrahydro-1-(1a,2,7,7a-tetrahydro-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphthalen-1-ylidene)-1H-cyclopropa[b]naphtha*lene;* syn-1)¹). To copper(I) thiophene-2-carboxylate (CuTC; 1.73 g, 9.07 mmol) in a flask purged with Ar and capped with a septum, dry NMP (25 ml) and bromo(stannyl) derivative endo-4 (1.0 g, 2.59 mmol) were added consecutively via syringe at -20° . The mixture was stirred for 1 h at -20° and for 3 h at r.t. (TLC monitoring). After completion of the reaction, 10% aq. NH₃ soln. (20 ml) was added, and the slurry was stirred until the brown solid disappeared. The mixture was extracted with Et₂O (3×20 ml), the combined org. extract dried $(MgSO₄)$ and concentrated, and the residue purified by FC (hexane): syn-1 (248 mg, 67%). Colorless crystals from CH₂Cl₂/hexane 1:3. M.p. 155 – 156 $^{\circ}$ ([5]: M.p. 144 – 157 $^{\circ}$). IR (KBr) 3058, 3019, 2991, 2966, 2911, 2889, 2829, 1493, 1454, 1435, 1300, 1113, 1041, 1004, 753, 739. ${}^{1}H\text{-NMR}$ (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 6.82 – 6.73 (*AA'BB'*, 8 arom. H), 2.97 (br. *d, A* of *AB*, *J*(2*syn*,2*anti*) = $J(7syn,7anti) = J(2'syn,2'anti) = J(7'syn,7'anti) = 15.0, 1 H-C(2), 1 H-C(2'), 1 H-C(7), 1 H-C(7')); 2.50$ (br. d, B of AB, $J(2syn,2anti) = J(7syn,7anti) = J(2'syn,2'anti) = J(7'syn,7'anti) = 15.0, 1 H-C(2),$ 1 H-C(2'), 1 H-C(7), 1 H-C(7')); 1.90 (m, H-C(1a), H-C(7a), H-C(1'a), H-C(7'a)). ¹³C-NMR $(100 \text{ MHz}, \text{CDC1}_3)$ 135.5; 128.3; 126.0; 118.8; 29.5; 14.7. EI-MS (70 eV): 285 $(M^+, 5)$, 267 (7), 240 (9), 180 (37), 153 (29), 142 (65), 129 (82), 116 (100), 105 (21), 91 (43), 66 (10).

 $X-Ray$ Crystal-Structure Determination of syn- $1⁴$). For the crystal structure determination, the single crystal of syn-1 was used for data collection on a four-circle Rigaku-R-AXIS-RAPID-S diffractometer equipped with a two-dimensional area IP detector. The graphite-monochromatized Mo K_a radiation ($\lambda =$ 0.71073 Å) and oscillation-scans technique with $\Delta \omega = 5^{\circ}$ for one image were used for data collection. Images for syn-1 were taken successfully by varying ω with three sets of different χ and φ values. The 108 images for six different runs covering ca. 99.7% of the Ewald spheres were performed. The lattice parameters were determined by the least-squares methods on the basis of all reflections with $F^2 > 2\sigma(F^2)$. Integration of the intensities, correction for Lorentz and polarization effects, and cell refinement was performed with CrystalClear (Rigaku/MSC Inc., 2005) software [21]. The structure was solved by direct methods SHELXS-97 [22], and non-H-atoms were refined by the full-matrix least-squares method with anisotropic temperature factors SHELXL-97 [22]. Crystal data: C_2H_{20} ; crystal system monoclinic; space group $P2_1/n$ (no.14); unit cell dimensions: $a = 8.8709(2)$, $b = 8.5274(2)$, $c = 21.1090(3)$ \AA , $\beta = 95.92(2)$ °; volume $1588.3(1)$ \AA^3 ; $Z=4$; $D_x=1.19$ Mg/m³; absorption coefficient 0.067 mm⁻¹; $F(000)$ 608; θ range for data collection 2.4 – 30.7°; refinement method: full-matrix least-square on F^2 ; data and parameters, 4877 and 212; goodness-of-fit on F^2 1.025; final R indices $(I > 2\sigma(I))$: $R_1 = 0.070$, $wR_2 = 0.183$; R indices (all data): $R_1 = 0.130$, $wR_2 = 0.218$; largest diff. peak and hole 0.160 and -0.182 e Å⁻³.

Reaction of exo-4/exo-6 4.2 : 1 with CuTC. As described for syn-1, with CuTC (1.74 g, 9.10 mmol), NMP (25 ml), and halo(stannyl) derivatives $exo-4/exo-6$ 4.2 : 1 (790 mg of $exo-4$ + 188 mg of $exo-6$, total 2.60 mmol). FC (hexane) yielded syn-1 (236 mg, 64%) and anti-1 (7 mg, 2%) in this order.

⁴⁾ CCDC-643590 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for this article. These data can be obtained free of charge via http://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif.

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