

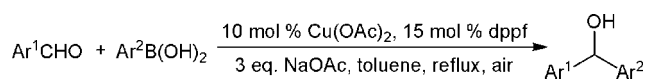
Copper(II) Acetate-Catalyzed Addition of Arylboronic Acids to Aromatic Aldehydes

Hanmei Zheng,[†] Qiang Zhang,[†] Jiuxi Chen,[†]
Miaochang Liu,[†] Shuanghua Cheng,[†] Jinchang Ding,^{*,†,‡}
Huayue Wu,^{*,†} and Weike Su^{†,§}

College of Chemistry and Materials Engineering,
Wenzhou University, Wenzhou 325027, P. R. China,
Wenzhou Vocational & Technical College,
Wenzhou 325035, P. R. China, and College of
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Zhejiang University of Technology,
Zhejiang, Key Laboratory of Pharmaceutical Engineering,
Hangzhou 310014, P. R. China

djc@wzvtc.cn; huayuewu@wzu.edu.cn

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A novel copper-catalyzed protocol for the synthesis of carbinol derivatives has been developed. In the presence of copper(II) acetate and dppf, carbinol derivatives were prepared by the addition of arylboronic acids to aromatic aldehydes in good to excellent yields. Moreover, the rigorous exclusion of air or moisture is not required in these transformations.

Diarylmethanols consist of an important building block in the synthesis of natural products and pharmacological active compounds as well as material science target molecules.¹ General approaches involve the reduction of ketones and addition of organometallic reagents to aldehydes. In recent years, great attention has been paid to the addition of organometallic reagents to aldehydes for the synthesis of diarylmethanols, such as organolithium,^{2a,d} organomagnesium,^{2e,g} organotin,^{2h,i} and organozinc.^{2l,m} However, these organometallic reagents are

either toxic, have poor functional group compatibility, or are sensitive to air and moisture.

Organoboron reagents enjoy great prestige due to their advantages of stability to air or moisture and good functional group tolerance.³ In 1997, Miyaura and co-workers reported a rhodium-catalyzed addition of aryl- and alkenyl-boronic acids to aldehydes⁴ and enones.⁵ Since then, various synthetic methods by rhodium-catalyzed⁶ and palladium-catalyzed⁷ approaches for such transformations have been developed. In our previous report, we have developed a palladium-catalyzed arylation of aldehydes to produce secondary alcohols in good yields.⁸ However, palladium is very expensive compared with copper. Furthermore, in our previous report, palladium-catalyzed aldehyde arylations did not tolerate bromo or formyl groups in the substrates. We report herein that diarylmethanols can be prepared successfully by the addition of arylboronic acids to aromatic aldehydes with excellent yields in the presence of copper(II) acetate.

Initially, we chose the addition of phenylboronic acid **2e** to 4-nitrobenzaldehyde **1a** as a model reaction using Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O as the copper source, NaOAc as the base, and toluene as the solvent. Considering ligands always play important roles in metal-catalyzed chemistry,⁹ we first focused on ligand screening (Chart 1). Through screening, we found that the electronic nature and steric demands of the arylphosphine ligands played important roles. For example, use of monodentate phosphine ligands resulted in moderate yields (Table 1, **L6–L11**), and the hindrance in the ligands or electron-poor ligands had poor catalytic activity (Table 1, **L12–L16**). Bidentate phosphines **L1** and **L2** with smaller bite angle than **L5** stopped the reaction. To our delight, bidentate phosphines with large bite angles such as **L4**, **L5**, and **L6** were effective for this transformation. In addition, we examined the aminophosphine ligands (Table 1,

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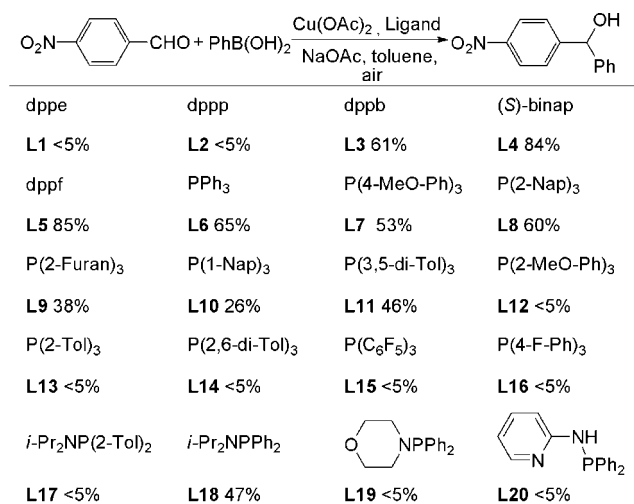
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CHART 1. Ligand Screening



All reactions were run with 4-nitrobenzaldehyde (30 mg, 0.2 mmol), phenylboronic acid (48.8 mg, 0.4 mmol), Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O (4.0 mg, 10 mol %), dppf ligand (10 mol %) and NaOAc (32.8 mg, 0.4 mmol) in 3 mL toluene at reflux for 24 h under air atmosphere with isolated yields reported.

TABLE 1. Effects of Bases, Solvents, and the Amounts of Ligand on the Copper(II) Acetate-Catalyzed Addition of Phenylboronic Acid to 4-Nitrobenzaldehyde^a

entry	base	solvent	yield ^b (%)
1	K ₂ CO ₃	toluene	<5
2	KF·2H ₂ O	toluene	<5
3	HCOONa	toluene	30
4	LiOH·H ₂ O	toluene	59
5	DABCO	toluene	17
6	DBU	toluene	<5
7	NaOAc	toluene	85
8	NaOAc	CH ₃ CH ₂ NO ₂	15
9	NaOAc	DMF	<5
10	NaOAc	DMSO	<5
11	NaOAc	dioxane	<5
12	NaOAc	DCE	<5
13	NaOAc	THF	<5
14	NaOAc	<i>t</i> -BuOMe	<5
15	NaOAc (3 equiv)	toluene	91
16	NaOAc (4 equiv)	toluene	93
17 ^c	NaOAc (3 equiv)	toluene	95
18 ^d	NaOAc (3 equiv)	toluene	96

^a All reactions were run with 4-nitrobenzaldehyde (30 mg, 0.2 mmol), phenylboronic acid (48.8 mg, 0.4 mmol), Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O (4.0 mg, 10 mol %), dppf ligand (10 mol %), and base (0.4 mmol) in 3 mL of solvent at reflux for 24 h under air atmosphere. ^b Isolated yields reported. ^c L/Cu = 1.5:1. ^d L/Cu = 2:1.

L17–L20), which had poor activity except for ligand **L18**. Finally, we chose commercial available **L5** as the best ligand in our system.

Further studies on the optimization of the reaction conditions such as bases, solvents and the ratio of **L5**/Cu for phenylation of 4-nitrobenzaldehyde are listed in Table 1. Among the bases, NaOAc was superior to some others such as K₂CO₃, KF·2H₂O, LiOH·H₂O, DABCO, DBU, and HCOONa. In addition, we also studied influence of the amount of NaOAc on the reaction yields. It was found that the yield was not significantly affected by adding different amount of NaOAc (Table 1, entries 7, 15, and 16). The choice of solvent was also vital to the success of the

TABLE 2. Copper(II) Acetate-Catalyzed Addition of Arylboronic Acids to Aromatic Aldehydes^a

entry	Ar ¹	Ar ²	product	yield (%)
1	4-NO ₂ -C ₆ H ₄ 1a	4-CF ₃ -C ₆ H ₄ 2a	3aa	84
2	1a	4-F-C ₆ H ₄ 2b	3ab	83
3	1a	4-Cl-C ₆ H ₄ 2c	3ac	90
4	1a	4-Br-C ₆ H ₄ 2d	3ad	92
5	1a	C ₆ H ₅ 2e	3ae	95
6	1a	4-Me-C ₆ H ₄ 2f	3af	96
7	1a	4-MeO-C ₆ H ₄ 2g	3ag	95
8	1a	3-MeO-C ₆ H ₄ 2h	3ah	90
9	1a	2-MeO-C ₆ H ₄ 2i	3ai	73
10	1a	2-Me-C ₆ H ₄ 2j	3aj	89
11	1a	1-naphthyl 2k	3ak	95
12	3-NO ₂ -C ₆ H ₄ 1b	2e	3be	90
13	2-NO ₂ -C ₆ H ₄ 1c	2e	3ce	74
14	4-CN-C ₆ H ₄ 1d	2e	3de	91
15	4-OHC-C ₆ H ₄ 1e	2e	3ee	92
16	4-MeO ₂ C-C ₆ H ₄ 1f	2e	3fe	57
17	2,4-(NO ₂) ₂ -C ₆ H ₃ 1g	2e	3ge	89
18	4-MeO ₂ S-C ₆ H ₄ 1h	2e	3he	90
19	C ₆ H ₅ 1i	2e	3ie	<5
20	2-furyl 1j	2e	3je	<5

^a All reactions were run with aldehyde (0.2 mmol), arylboronic acid (0.4 mmol), Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O (4.0 mg, 10 mol %), dppf ligand (15 mol %), and NaOAc (49.2 mg, 0.6 mmol) in 3 mL of toluene at reflux for 24 h under air atmosphere. ^b Isolated yields reported.

catalytic reaction. Toluene appeared to be the best choice among the common solvents such as CH₃CH₂NO₂, DMF, DMSO, dioxane, DCE, THF, and *t*-BuOMe. Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O exhibited the highest catalytic activity compared with CuCl₂ and CuCl. Increasing the amount of **L5** in the procedure afforded nearly quantitative yield (Table 1, entries 17 and 18). In the light of these results, we adopted conditions with 0.1 equiv of Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O, 0.15 equiv of **L5**, 4-nitrobenzaldehyde, and 3 equiv of NaOAc in the present protocol.

With optimal conditions in hand, the reaction of various arylboronic acids with different aromatic aldehydes was examined to explore the scope of the reaction (Table 2).

The reaction proceeded smoothly with a variety of functional groups and afforded diarylmethanols in excellent yields.

In our system, electronic effect on the arylboronic acids had little influence (Table 2, entries 1–7). Electron-withdrawing arylboronic acids, which are less nucleophilic, and hence, transmetalate more slowly than electro-neutral analogues, are prone to homocoupling and protodeboronation side reactions.^{9d} However, in our catalytic system, 4-chlorophenylboronic acid **2c** and 4-bromophenylboronic acid **2d** proceeded smoothly with **1a** to afford **3ac** and **3ad** in 90% and 92% yields, respectively. The products of **3ac** and **3ad** had the chloro and bromo group untouched (Table 2, entries 3 and 4). For the aldehydes, electron-withdrawing aromatic aldehydes reacted with **2e** easily and gave diarylmethanols in good yields (Table 2, entries 12–18). Particularly, 4-formylbenzaldehyde **1e** coupled with **2e** and the product of **3ee** left one formyl group untouched (Table 2, entry 15), which may be due to the electronic nature playing important roles, C=O bond activity was decreased in the product **3ee**, and stopped addition of phenylboronic acid **2e** to formal group of **3ee**. Unfortunately, the reaction was unsuccessful using aldehydes with neutral, electron-rich groups or aliphatic aldehydes.

We further examined the steric effect in our system. A monosubstitution group on the ortho or meta position for both

arylboronic acids (Table 2, entries 7–9) and aromatic aldehydes (Table 2, entries 5, 12, and 13) had little effect on the yields in the reaction. For example, **1a** reacted with arylboronic acids **2g**, **2h**, and **2i** efficiently and afforded **3ag**, **3ah**, and **3ai** in 95%, 90%, and 73% yields, respectively (Table 2, entries 7–9).

Of particular note, the reaction rate with aldehydes **1g** or **1h** was faster than others (Table 2, entries 17 and 18), which may be due to the electron-withdrawing groups increasing C=O bond activity and accelerating the reactions. Moreover, the rigorous exclusion of air or moisture is not required in the present protocol.

In summary, describe here the first example of an efficient and practical approach for the synthesis of a variety of carbinol derivatives via the combination of an inexpensive copper(II) acetate catalyst and air-stable dppf ligand. Work to probe the detailed mechanism and apply the reaction in organic synthesis is currently underway.

Experimental Section

General Procedure for the Synthesis of Carbinol Derivatives. Under an air atmosphere, a Schlenk tube was charged with Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O (4.0 mg, 0.02 mmol), dppf (16.6 mg, 0.03 mmol), arylboronic acid (0.4 mmol), aldehyde (0.2 mmol), NaOAc (49.2 mg, 0.6 mmol), and toluene (3 mL) under ice–salt (–20 °C). The mixture was stirred for 0.5 h at room temperature, refluxed for 24 h, and then cooled in a Schlenk tube to room temperature. The mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (4 × 5 mL), and the organic layers were washed with water. The organic layers were dried over MgSO₄, concentrated, and purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel to give the desired product.

4-Nitrophenyl(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)methanol(3aa)(Table 2, entry 1): ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 2.52 (d, *J* = 2.6 Hz, 1H), 5.99 (s, 1H), 7.48–7.64 (m, 6H), 8.21 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 74.9, 122.1, 123.9, 125.8, 125.9, 126.9, 127.2, 128.3, 130.3, 146.4, 147.5, 149.9; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹)

3455 (–OH); MS (EI) *m/z* 297 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₄H₁₀F₃NO₃: C, 56.57; H, 3.39. Found: C, 56.40; H, 3.45.

3-Methoxyphenyl(4-nitrophenyl)methanol (3ah) (Table 2, entry 8): ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 2.74 (s, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 5.86 (s, 1H), 6.82–6.93 (m, 3H), 7.29 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.57 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 8.17 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 55.2, 75.3, 112.4, 113.5, 118.9, 123.6, 127.0, 129.9, 144.2, 147.1, 150.6, 159.9; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3444 (–OH); MS (EI) *m/z* 259 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₄H₁₃NO₄: C, 64.86; H, 5.05. Found: C, 64.90; H, 5.11.

2-Methoxyphenyl(4-nitrophenyl)methanol (3ai) (Table 2, entry 9): ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 3.17 (s, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 6.10 (s, 1H), 6.89–6.92 (m, 2H), 7.21–7.32 (m, 2H), 7.55 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 8.15 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 55.4, 71.6, 111.0, 121.1, 123.4, 127.1, 127.8, 128.2, 129.0, 129.5, 130.7, 150.9; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3438 (–OH); MS (EI) *m/z* 259 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₄H₁₃NO₄: C, 64.86; H, 5.05. Found: C, 64.79; H, 4.98.

Naphthalen-1-yl(4-nitrophenyl)methanol (3ak) (Table 2, entry 11): ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 2.79 (brs, 1H), 6.55 (s, 1H), 7.47–7.51 (m, 4H), 7.58 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.85–7.91 (m, 2H), 8.01–8.04 (m, 1H), 8.15 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 73.4, 123.6, 123.7, 125.3, 125.6, 126.0, 126.6, 127.5, 129.0, 129.4, 130.5, 134.2, 137.8, 147.3, 150.3; IR (KBr, cm⁻¹) 3450 (–OH); MS (EI) *m/z* 279 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₇H₁₃NO₃: C, 73.11; H, 4.69. Found: C, 73.18; H, 4.75.

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Supporting Information Available: Experimental procedures along with copies of spectroscopic and data. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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