

Asymmetric Synthesis of Triarylmethanes by Rhodium-Catalyzed Enantioselective Arylation of Diarylmethylamines with Arylboroxines

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S Supporting Information

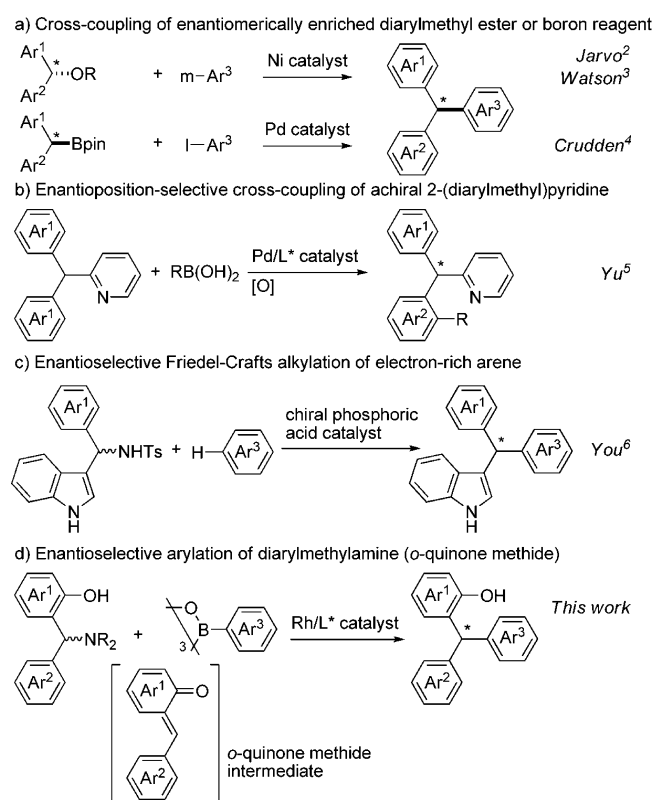
ABSTRACT: The reaction of racemic diarylmethylamines, ($\text{Ar}^1\text{Ar}^2\text{CHNR}_2$), where Ar^1 is substituted with a 2-hydroxy group, with arylboroxines (Ar^3BO)₃ in the presence of a chiral diene-rhodium catalyst gave high yields of chiral triarylmethanes ($\text{Ar}^1\text{Ar}^2\text{CH}^*\text{Ar}^3$) with high enantioselectivity (up to 97% ee). The reaction is assumed to proceed through *o*-quinone methide intermediates which undergo Rh-catalyzed asymmetric 1,4-addition of the arylboron reagents.

Triarylmethanes ($\text{Ar}^1\text{Ar}^2\text{Ar}^3\text{CH}$) are known to be an important class of compounds because of their high utility in medicinal chemistry and materials science as well as in organic synthesis.¹ The enantiomerically enriched triarylmethanes have been synthesized by a few methods including asymmetric catalysis, which are summarized in Scheme 1. They are: (a) stereospecific Ni- or Pd-catalyzed cross-coupling of enantiomerically enriched diarylmethyl esters^{2,3} or boron reagents;⁴ (b) enantioselective oxidative cross-coupling of 2-(diarylmethyl)pyridine catalyzed by a chiral Pd catalyst;⁵ and (c) asymmetric Friedel–Crafts alkylation of electron-rich arenes catalyzed by a chiral phosphoric acid.⁶ Here we report a new type of asymmetric synthesis of triarylmethanes which is realized by Rh-catalyzed enantioselective substitution of diarylmethylamines with arylboron reagents (Scheme 1d).

On the other hand, it has been well recognized that the rhodium-catalyzed asymmetric arylation of olefins with arylboron reagents is one of the most convenient and reliable methods of creating benzylic stereocenters with high enantioselectivity.⁷ The olefinic substrates successfully applied for the asymmetric arylation are mainly electron-deficient olefins, typically those activated by carbonyl groups such as α,β -unsaturated ketones.⁸ We envisioned that *o*-quinone methide,⁹ which is classified as an α,β -unsaturated ketone, could be an appropriate substrate for the catalytic asymmetric synthesis of chiral triarylmethanes.

At initiating our studies, the reaction of isolated quinone methide **1a**, which is obtained according to a reported procedure,¹⁰ was examined for its reactivity under some of the standard conditions used for α,β -unsaturated ketones.⁷ Thus, **1a** was allowed to react with phenylboroxine (**2a**) in the presence of $[\text{RhCl}(\text{cod})]_2$ (5 mol % of Rh) and KOH (40 mol %) in dioxane/ H_2O (10/1) at 40 °C.¹¹ All the quinone methide **1a** was consumed within 15 h to give 82% yield of triarylmethane **3aa** together with 18% of a cyclic phenylboronate **4a** (entry 1 in Table 1). Use of $[\text{RhCl}((R)\text{-binap})]_2$ ¹² as a catalyst under the

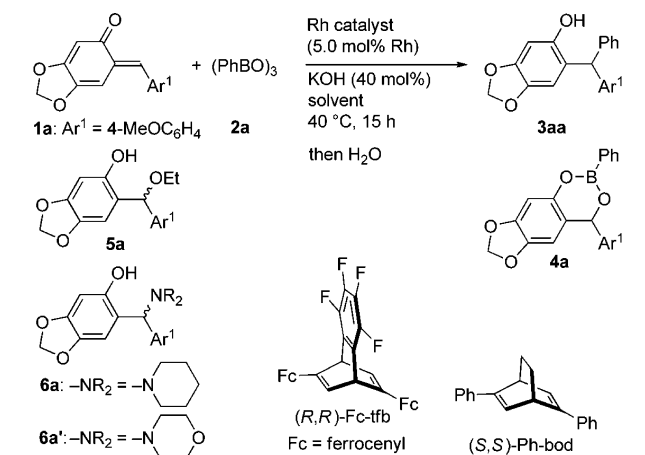
Scheme 1. Synthesis of Enantiomerically Enriched Triarylmethanes



same conditions gave a lower yield (61%) of triarylmethane **3aa** with 79% ee (entry 2). These results demonstrate that the quinone methide can be an appropriate substrate for the rhodium-catalyzed asymmetric arylation forming chiral triarylmethanes, but the low availability of isolable quinone methides is a serious drawback in studying the present asymmetric reactions. Based on the report by Schaus that the ethyl ether **5a** is a good precursor to generate quinone methide in situ for their asymmetric addition of boronates catalyzed by a chiral binaphthol,^{13,14} we examined **5a** for the rhodium-catalyzed asymmetric arylation. It turned out that the yield of triarylmethane is low under the basic conditions with both cod and binap-rhodium catalysts, cyclic boronate **4a** being the major

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Table 1. Rhodium-Catalyzed Asymmetric Arylation of Quinone Methide **1a and Its Precursors **5a** and **6a** with Phenylboroxine (**2a**)**

entry	subst	ligand on Rh	solvent ^b	yield (%) ^c 3aa	yield (%) ^c 4a	% ee ^d 3aa
1	1a	cod ^e	dioxane/H ₂ O	82	18	—
2	1a	(S) -binap ^f	dioxane/H ₂ O	61	39	79
3	5a	cod ^e	dioxane/H ₂ O	18	82	—
4	5a	(S) -binap ^f	dioxane/H ₂ O	16	84	51
5	4a	cod ^e	dioxane/H ₂ O	0	100	—
6	6a	cod ^e	dioxane/H ₂ O	22 ^g	18	—
7	6a	(S) -binap ^f	dioxane/H ₂ O	15 ^g	12	76
8	6a	cod ^e	dioxane	81 ^g	12	—
9	6a	(S) -binap ^f	dioxane	55 (55) ^g	26	72
10	6a	(R,R) -Fc-tfb ^h	dioxane	87 (85)	13	95
11	6a	(S,S) -Ph-bod ⁱ	dioxane	78 (72)	16	81
12	6a	(S,S) -Ph-tfb ⁱ	dioxane	78 (76)	17	64
13	6a	(S) -segphos ^j	dioxane	59 (56)	23	96
14	6a	(R,R) -Fc-tfb ^h	THF	70 (66)	13	94
15	6a	(R,R) -Fc-tfb ^h	toluene	64 (62)	22	92
16	6a	(R,R) -Fc-tfb ^h	dichloroethane	59 (57)	15	92
17	6a'	(R,R) -Fc-tfb ^h	dioxane	79 (78)	21	94

^aReaction conditions: **1a**, **5a**, or **6a** (0.12 mmol), (PhBO)₃ (**2a**) (0.12 mmol (0.36 mmol of B)), Rh catalyst (5 mol % of Rh), and KOH (0.048 mmol). ^bSolvent: dioxane/H₂O (1.0/0.1 mL), dioxane, THF, toluene, dichloroethane (1.0 mL). ^cThe yields are obtained by ¹H NMR analysis of the crude reaction mixture. Isolated yields in parentheses. ^dThe % ee was determined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase column. ^e[RhCl(cod)]₂. ^f[RhCl((*R*)-binap)]₂. ^g**6a** was recovered in 60%, 73%, 7%, and 19% in entries 6, 7, 8, and 9, respectively. ^h[RhCl((*R,R*)-Fc-tfb)]₂. ⁱ[RhCl(coe)]₂/ (S,S) -Ph-bod. ^j[RhCl(coe)]₂/ (S) -segphos.

product (entries 3–4). It is noted that cyclic boronate **4a** is too stable to generate the quinone methide under the reaction conditions¹⁵ (entry 5).

Our attention was turned to diarylmethylamines as precursors of quinone methide,⁹ which are readily prepared from phenol derivatives, aromatic aldehydes, and secondary amines,¹⁶ and are isolated pure without difficulty due to their high stability compared with the diarylmethyl ether analogs such as **5a**. The diarylmethylamine **6a**,¹⁷ where the amino group is piperidino,

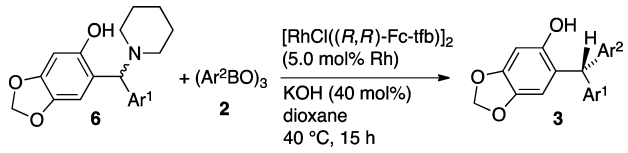
was subjected to the rhodium-catalyzed arylation. Although the conversion of **6a** is not high in the dioxane/H₂O mixed solvent, the triarylmethane **3aa** was formed in 22% and 15% yields with the Rh-cod and Rh-binap catalysts, respectively (entries 6 and 7). Screening of the reaction solvents revealed that the reaction in dioxane without H₂O greatly improves the yield of triarylmethane. Thus, the yields of **3aa** were increased to 81% and 55% with the Rh-cod and Rh-binap catalysts, respectively (entries 8 and 9). Of the chiral diene ligands¹⁸ examined (entries 10–12), Fc-tfb¹⁹ showed the highest performance in terms of both catalytic activity and enantioselectivity to give 85% yield of triarylmethane **3aa** with 95% ee (entry 10).²⁰ With segphos²¹ as a chiral ligand, the enantioselectivity was higher (96% ee), but the yield was lower (56%) (entry 13). Dioxane is a solvent of choice for the present reaction, the yield of **3aa** being lower in THF, toluene, and dichloroethane (entries 14–16). The reaction of morpholino-substituted diarylmethylamine **6a'** with the Rh/Fc-tfb catalyst in dioxane gave **3aa** with essentially the same enantioselectivity (94% ee) as **6a**, although the yield is slightly lower (entry 17).

NMR experiments showed that the addition of morpholine to **6a** in CDCl₃ brings about a rapid equilibration ($t_{1/2} < 1$ h at 20 °C) with **6a'** and piperidine (see Supporting Information). Although *o*-quinone methide **1a** is not detected by NMR, it is likely that the equilibration proceeds through elimination–addition via the *o*-quinone methide intermediate, and the present Rh-catalyzed substitution of diarylmethylamine with arylboroxine also proceeds through the addition of an arylrhodium intermediate²² to the *o*-quinone methide.

Several diarylmethylamines **6**, where one of the two aryl groups is 2-hydroxy-4,5-methylenedioxyphenyl, were subjected to the reaction with a variety of arylboroxines **2** under the conditions optimized for the reaction of diarylmethylamine **6a** with phenylboroxine (**2a**) (entry 10 in Table 1). The results summarized in Table 2 show that the enantioselectivity is generally high for most of the aryl groups in both diarylmethylamines **6** and arylboroxines **2** with some exceptions (entries 5, 6, 25, 26, and 27). One structural limitation of diarylmethylamine **6** is that the enantioselectivity is low with the ortho-substituted aryl group (entry 25). The arylation of diarylmethylamine **6b** with 4-methoxy- (**2e**) and 4-methylphenylboroxine (**2b**) was found to take place in the absence of rhodium catalyst to some extent,²³ which is in good agreement with the lower % ee observed in the asymmetric arylation with **2e** and **2b** (entries 5 and 6). The enantioselectivity was modest for the addition of 3-thienyl- and 3-furylboronic acids (entries 26 and 27).

The absolute configuration of the product **3bh** (Ar¹ = Ph, Ar² = 4-BrC₆H₄) was determined to be (*S*) by its X-ray crystallographic analysis.²⁴ The *S* configuration obtained with (*R,R*)-Fc-tfb is rationalized by the addition of aryl–rhodium intermediate to the quinone methide from its *si* face. The coordination with the other face is less favorable due to the steric repulsions between the carbonyl of quinone methide and one of the ferrocenyl groups on the diene ligand²⁵ (Scheme 2). All the products under the present conditions with (*R,R*)-Fc-tfb are assumed to have the same configuration.

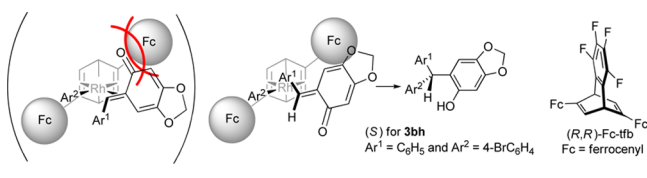
To generate the *o*-quinone methide intermediate efficiently under the present conditions, an electron-donating substituent on the 2-hydroxyphenyl group is necessary. Replacement of 4,5-methylenedioxy in **6a** by methyl made the diarylmethylamine **7a** much less reactive, and the yield of the triarylmethane product **8ai** is low even at higher temperature (70 °C) for a longer reaction time (Scheme 3). With MeO substitution, **7b** is more

Table 2. Rhodium-Catalyzed Asymmetric Arylation of Diarylmethylamines 6 with Arylboroxines 2^a


entry	4: Ar ¹	2: Ar ²	3: yield (%) ^b	ee (%) ^c
1	6a: 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3aa: 85	95
2	6a: 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	2b: 4-MeC ₆ H ₄	3ab: 91	90
3	6a: 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	2c: 3-MeOC ₆ H ₄	3ac: 80	96
4	6a: 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	2d: 4-ClC ₆ H ₄	3ad: 82	95
5	6b: Ph	2e: 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	3be: 94	59
6	6b: Ph	2b: 4-MeC ₆ H ₄	3bb: 85	84
7 ^d	6b: Ph	2c: 3-MeOC ₆ H ₄	3bc: 99	95
8	6b: Ph	2f: 3-MeC ₆ H ₄	3bf: 84	90
9	6b: Ph	2g: 4-FC ₆ H ₄	3bg: 82	90
10	6b: Ph	2d: 4-ClC ₆ H ₄	3bd: 83	95
11	6b: Ph	2h: 4-BrC ₆ H ₄	3bh: 71	95
12	6b: Ph	2i: 4-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄	3bi: 82	97
13	6b: Ph	2j: 4-MeOCOC ₆ H ₄	3bj: 65	95
14	6b: Ph	2k: 4-NO ₂ C ₆ H ₄	3bk: 53	96
15	6c: 4-MeC ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3ca: 85	90
16	6d: 4-Me ₂ NC ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3da: 85	96
17	6e: 4-FC ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3ea: 87	93
18	6f: 4-ClC ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3fa: 86	94
19	6g: 4-BrC ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3ga: 82	91
20	6h: 4-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3ha: 81	94
21	6i: 4-NO ₂ C ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3ia: 78	91
22	6j: 2-naphthyl	2a: Ph	3ja: 90	94
23 ^{e,f}	6j: 2-naphthyl	2a: Ph	3ja: 88	94
24	6k: 2-thienyl	2a: Ph	3ka: 59	90
25	6l: 2-MeC ₆ H ₄	2a: Ph	3la: 74	62
26 ^f	6a: 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	2l: 3-thienyl ^g	3al: 77	50
27 ^f	6a: 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	2m: 3-furyl ^g	3am: 35	67

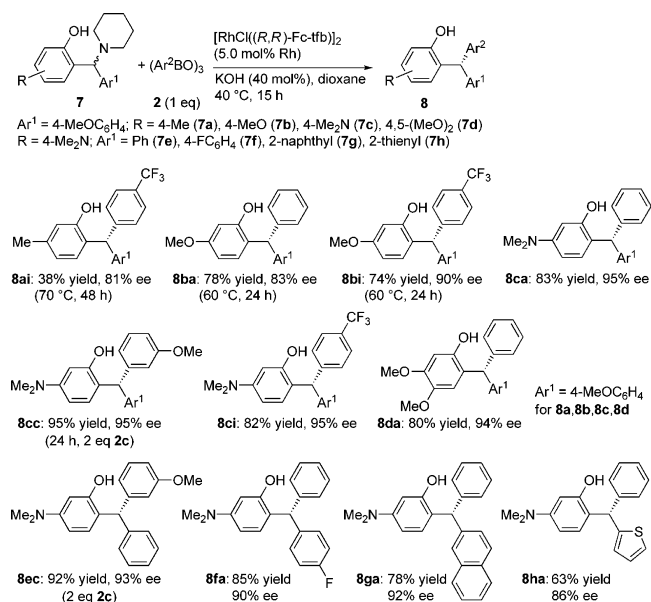
^aReaction conditions: diarylmethylamine 6 (0.12 mmol), arylboroxine 2 (0.36 mmol of B), [RhCl((R,R)-Fc-tfb)]₂ (5 mol % of Rh), KOH (0.048 mmol), dioxane (1.0 mL) at 40 °C for 15 h. ^bIsolated yield. ^cThe % ee was determined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase column. ^dBoroxine 2c (0.72 mmol of B). ^eReaction of 6j (2.0 mmol) with 3 mol % of the catalyst for 40 h. ^fWith [RhCl((S,S)-Fc-tfb)]₂. ^gThe boronic acid (0.72 mmol) was used.

Scheme 2. Proposed Stereochemical Pathway for the Asymmetric Arylation of a Quinone Methide Generated from 6 with 2 Catalyzed by Rh/(R,R)-Fc-tfb

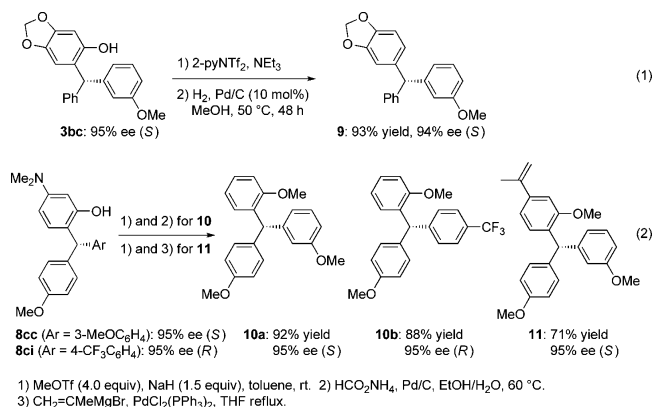


reactive than 7a, but it is still necessary to heat the reaction. Under optimized conditions (at 60 °C for 24 h) 7b gave a high yield of the triarylmethanes 8ba and 8bi albeit with lower enantioselectivity. Dimethylamino group can activate the diarylmethylamines 7c,e,f,g,h to make their reactivity comparable with the methylenedioxy group. The reaction with boroxines 2 gave the corresponding triarylmethanes 8 with the enantioselectivity as high as for methylenedioxy substrates 6.

Scheme 3. Rhodium-Catalyzed Asymmetric Arylation of Diarylmethylamines 7 with Arylboroxines 2



The hydroxyl group in the triarylmethane products can be readily removed by palladium-catalyzed reduction of triflate^{26,27} in a high yield. One example is shown in eq 1, where 3bc was



reduced into 9 without serious loss of enantiomeric purity. Conversion of dimethylamino group in 8c was also successful via trimethylammonium generated by treatment with MeOTf (eq 2). Methylation of the amino group and phenol oxygen in 8cc followed by reductive removal of the ammonium²⁸ gave chiral triarylmethane 10a, where the three methoxy groups are located at ortho, meta, and para positions, respectively. The amino group was replaced by an alkenyl group by the palladium-catalyzed Grignard cross-coupling reaction²⁹ giving 11. During these transformations, no racemization was observed.

In summary, we have developed a new type of catalytic asymmetric synthesis of chiral triarylmethanes, which is realized by a rhodium-catalyzed asymmetric substitution of diarylmethylamines with arylboron reagents. The reaction is assumed to proceed through *o*-quinone methide intermediates generated from diarylmethylamines. The enantioselectivity is generally high ($\geq 90\%$ ee) with the rhodium catalyst coordinated with a chiral diene ligand (Fc-tfb).

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

● Supporting Information

Experimental procedures, compound characterization data, and crystallographic data (CIF). The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/jacs.5b03277.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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(20) The yield of the phenylation product **3aa** was lower (47%) with a smaller amount (0.06 mmol (0.18 mmol of B)) of (PhBO)₃. The reaction of **6a** with PhB(OH)₂ and PhBF₃K in place of (PhBO)₃ under the same conditions for entry 10 in Table 1 gave **3aa**, in 78% yield (95% ee) and in <3% yield, respectively.

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(22) For the catalytic cycle of Rh-catalyzed 1,4-addition of organo-boronic acids, see ref 12.

(23) In the absence of rhodium catalyst, the reactions in entries 5 and 6 under otherwise same conditions gave the arylation products in 58% (**3be**) and 5% (**3bb**) yields, respectively. The rhodium-catalyzed reaction at 23 °C gave **3be** with 72% ee albeit in a low yield (40%).

(24) The details are described in Supporting Information.

(25) The rationalization of stereochemical pathway using this type of model has been always successful (ref 18b). See also Hayashi, T.; Ueyama, K.; Tokunaga, N.; Yoshida, K. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2003**, *125*, 11508.

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