

Samarium Diiodide Promoted Generation and Asymmetric Hydroxyalkylation of *N,O*-Diprotected (3*S*)-3-Pyrrolidinol 2-Carbanions

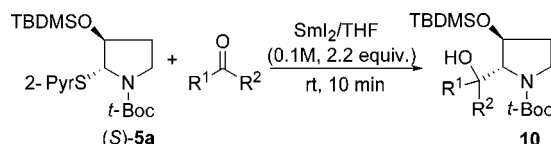
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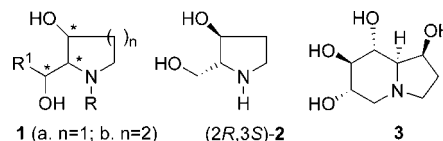
ABSTRACT



The *N,O*-diprotected chiral nonracemic 2-pyridyl 3-pyrrolidinol-2-yl sulfide **5a** undergoes efficient SmI₂ mediated reduction to give the *N,O*-diprotected 3-pyrrolidinol 2-carbanion intermediate **D**, which reacted under Barbier-type conditions with ketones and aldehydes to afford the protected *N*-α-hydroxyalkyl-3-pyrrolidines **10b–h** with excellent diastereoselectivity at the newly formed chiral center in the pyrrolidine ring. Application of the present method led to the formal asymmetric syntheses of (2*R*,3*S*)-2-hydroxymethyl-3-pyrrolidinol (**2**) and (2*S*,3*S*)-3-hydroxyproline (**12**).

2-Hydroxyalkyl-3-pyrrolidinols **1a** and their higher homologues **1b** are key structural features found in a number of polyhydroxylated bioactive natural products, which include pyrrolidine, pyrrolizidine, and indolizidine alkaloids.¹ For example, (2*R*,3*S*)-2-hydroxymethyl-3-pyrrolidinol (**2**) (CYB-3)² and castanospermine (**3**) are alkaloids isolated from the seeds of *Castanospermum australe*.^{3a} Castanospermine has also been isolated from the dried pod of *Alexa leiopetala*,^{3b}

and was found to be a powerful inhibitor of α- and β-glucosidases.⁴ The important bioactivities exhibited by these alkaloids and/or azasugars have stimulated considerable synthetic interest and a number of strategies have been developed for the syntheses of these natural products.¹ However, efficient and straightforward approaches continue to be highly desirable.



A conceptually attractive approach to 2-hydroxyalkyl-3-pyrrolidinols involves generation of the chiral nonracemic

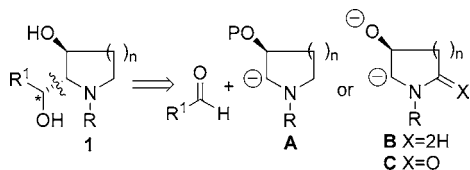
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Scheme 1. Retrosynthetic Analysis of 2-Hydroxyalkyl 3-Pyrrolidinols **1a** and Their Higher Homologues **1b**



3-pyrrolidinol 2-carbanion synthon **A** (Scheme 1). However, this remains a challenging problem in carbanion chemistry despite much effort having been paid, and a number of unpoled methods having been developed, for the generation of *N*- α -carbanions in general,⁵ in particular 2-lithiopyrrolidines or 2-lithiopiperidines.^{6,7} Past attempts at generating the α -carbanion synthons **A**, **B**, or **C** suffered from β -elimination (for **A**, *P* = Me),⁸ or wrong regioselectivity (for **B**),⁹ or quick proton exchange (for **C**).¹⁰ Only in a specific case, where a coordinating group (methoxycarbonyl) was present in the C-2 position, was the 3-hydroxylate 2-lithiopyrrolidine generated.¹¹ Alternatively, both achiral¹² and chiral nonracemic¹³ synthetic equivalents of **A** have been reported. In continuation of our interests in developing substituted 2-lithiopyrrolidine-based synthetic methodologies for alkaloid synthesis,^{10,13} we wish to report herein our results on the development of a samarium diiodide (SmI_2) mediated

α -hydroxyalkylation method⁷ using *N,O*-diprotected 2-pyrrolidinyl sulfides **5** as the synthetic equivalents of the chiral nonracemic 3-pyrrolidinol 2-carbanion synthons **A**.

Inspired by the SmI_2 -mediated¹⁴ C-glycosylation chemistry developed by Beau¹⁵ and Skrydstrup,¹⁶ the sulfones **4** and sulfides **5** were designed as the synthetic equivalents of **A** (*P* = TBDMS, Bn) (Figure 1).

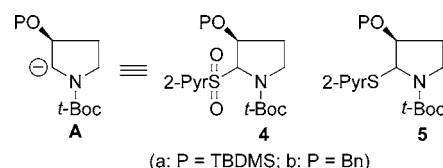
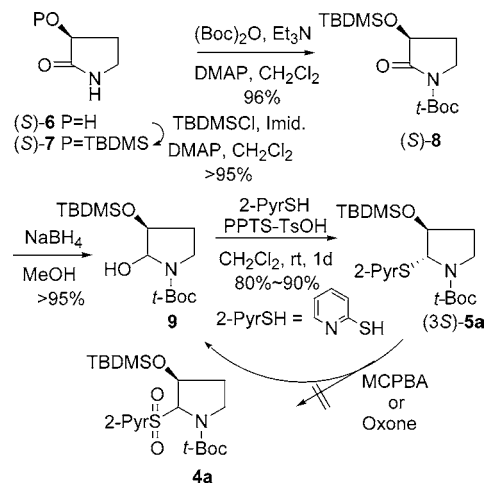


Figure 1. Synthetic equivalents of synthons **A**.

We first selected sulfone **4a** (*P* = TBDMS) as a precursor of synthon **A**. However, the failure to prepare **4a**¹⁷ led us to give up sulfones **4** (*P* = TBDMS, Bn) and turn to sulfides **5** (*P* = TBDMS, Bn) as the synthetic equivalents of **A**. The synthesis of **5a** is depicted in Scheme 2. Known (*S*)-3-

Scheme 2. Synthesis of *N,O*-Diprotected 2-Pyrrolidinyl Sulfide **5a**



hydroxy-2-pyrrolidinone¹⁸ (**6**) was silylated (TBDMSCl, imidazole, DMAP, CH_2Cl_2 , room temperature, 24 h) to give (*S*)-**7** in 95% yield. Treatment of (*S*)-**7** with di-*tert*-butyl dicarbonate in the presence of both triethylamine and a

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(17) Attempts to oxidize **5a** with either *m*-CPBA or oxone failed. Instead, the hydrolyzed product was always obtained.

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catalytic amount of DMAP provided (*S*)-**8** in 96% yield. Controlled regioselective reduction¹⁹ of (*S*)-**8** with NaBH₄ at 0 °C yielded a diastereomeric mixture of *N,O*-hemiacetal **9** in 95% yield. TLC monitoring of the reaction showed that **9** was formed as only one diastereomer, which partially and readily epimerized during the workup procedure and also upon standing. Reaction of **9** with 2-mercaptopyridine in the presence of 1% (w/w) of a 1:1 mixture of PPTS and TsOH yielded the desired **5a** in nearly diastereomerically pure form, which epimerized and hydrolyzed readily.

With multigram quantities of **5a** available, SmI₂-mediated hydroxyalkylations were investigated. To test the possibility of using **5a** as a synthetic equivalent of **A**, a THF solution of **5a** was treated, at 20 °C and in the presence of an excess of MeOH, with 2.2 molar equiv of SmI₂ (0.1 M in THF) for 10 min. In such a way, the desired protected (*S*)-3-pyrrolidinol (**10a**) was isolated in 95% yield (Scheme 3,

Scheme 3. SmI₂-Mediated Hydroxyalkylations of **5a** and **5b**

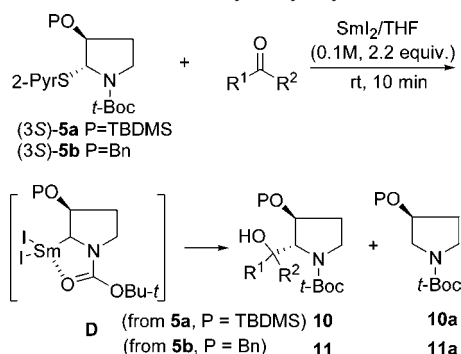


Table 1, entry 1). The formation of **10a** in high yield implied that the reductive samarium of **5a** occurred smoothly, and the presumed organosamarium (III) intermediate **D** was stable to β-elimination.

Encouraged by this result, we then proceeded to study the reductive hydroxyalkylation of **5a** under Barbier-type conditions. Happily, treatment of a mixture of cyclohexanone (1.5 molar equiv) and **5a** in THF with freshly prepared SmI₂ (0.1 M in THF, 2.2 molar equiv) at room temperature, followed by stirring at room temperature for 10 min (protocol A), afforded the desired reductive coupling product **10b** in 50% yield, alongside the protonated product **10a** in 33% yield (Table 1, entry 2). Better yields (62%) of **10b** could be obtained by using an alternative procedure (protocol B), which consisted of adding freshly prepared SmI₂ (0.1 M in THF, 4.0 molar equiv) to a mixture of cyclohexanone (2.0 molar equiv) and **5a** in THF at 0 °C, followed by warming the reaction mixture to room temperature over 10 min (Table 1, entry 3).

The desired product **10b** was formed exclusively according to TLC analysis and chromatographic separation of the crude reaction mixture. The homogeneity of **10b** was confirmed

Table 1. The Results for the Reductive Coupling of **5a/5b** with Electrophiles (Scheme 3)²⁰

Entry	Sulfide (5a/5b) / EI	Product (% Yield) ^a (d.r.) ^b	Side product (% Yield) ^a
1	5a / MeOH	TBDMSO 10a (95)	—
2	5a / (CH ₂) ₅ CO	TBDMSO 10b (50) ^c 10b (62) ^d	10a (33)
3	5a / (CH ₂) ₅ CO	10b (62) ^d	10a (33)
4	5a / (CH ₂) ₄ CO	TBDMSO 10c (58) ^d	10a (32)
5	5a / MeCOMe	TBDMSO 10d (81) ^d	10a (8)
6	5a / MeCOEt	TBDMSO 10e (70) (56:44) ^c 10e (73) (55:45) ^d	10a (17)
7	5a / MeCOEt	10e (73) (55:45) ^d	10a (21)
8	5a / <i>n</i> -PrCHO	TBDMSO 10f (92) (42:58) ^c	10a (5)
9	5a / <i>i</i> -PrCHO	TBDMSO 10g (60) (39:61) ^c	10a (32)
10	5b / (CH ₂) ₅ CO	BnO 11b (52) ^d	11a (35)
11	5b / <i>n</i> -PrCHO	BnO 11c (63) (45:55) ^c	11a (32)

^a Isolated yield. ^b Diastereoselectivity (at the carbinolic center) determined by chromatographic separation. ^c With protocol A. ^d Using protocol B.

by HPLC analysis; however, its ¹H (500 MHz) and ¹³C NMR (125 MHz) spectra (measured at room temperature in CDCl₃) clearly indicated the presence of two isomers. Keeping in mind that extensive rotamerism exists in carbamates such as **10a**, and to verify the nature of the isomerism of **10b**, ¹H and ¹³C NMR experiments of **10b** were performed in deuterated DMSO at a range of temperatures. Indeed, at 25

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°C, the ^1H and ^{13}C spectra of **10b** showed the presence of two isomers as did those recorded in CDCl_3 at 25 °C. At 80 °C, however, the ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra of **10b** in deuterated DMSO simplified and only one isomer was observed. When the temperature was lowered to 25 °C, the ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra of **10b** were identical with those taken prior to heating. These experiments clearly demonstrated that the isomers observed at room temperature were rotamers instead of diastereomers. Thus, the reductive N - α -hydroxyalkylation of **5a** led to only one isolable diastereomer. Consequently, the reductive hydroxyalkylation of **5a** was highly diastereoselective in establishing the C-2 chiral center of the pyrrolidine ring. As regarding the stereochemistry of the product, although the flexibility of the pyrrolidine ring does not allow the determination of stereochemistry, we have assumed that the *trans*-isomer is formed for steric reasons. This assumption was confirmed by the α -hydroxymethylation of **5a** with formaldehyde, which led to a known compound (*vide infra*).

We next examined the reductive couplings of **5a** with other ketones and aldehydes, and the results are summarized in Table 1. As can be seen, the reductive hydroxyalkylation of **5a** with symmetric ketones gave, in each case, only one diastereomer (Table 1, entries 2–5), and when unsymmetrical ketones or aldehydes were used, a diastereomeric mixture (originating from the newly formed exocyclic chiral carbinol center) was obtained (Table 1, entries 6–9). For ketones, protocol B generally gave better results than protocol A (Table 1, entries 2/3 and 6/7). The silyl group (TBDMS) protected pyridyl sulfide **5a** generally gave better results than the benzyl protected sulfide **5b**²¹ did (Table 1, entries 3/10 and 8/11).

To illustrate the utility of the method, and to confirm the relative stereochemistry of the reaction, the reductive coupling of **5a** with formaldehyde was investigated (Scheme 4). The samarium(III) intermediate **D** reacted with formaldehyde to give **10h** as the only isolable diastereomer, which was identical in all respects with the known compound

(*2R,3S*)-**10h**.²² Since **10h** has been converted to (*2R,3S*)-2-hydroxymethyl-3-pyrrolidinol²³ (**2**) and its oxidized form, (*2S,3S*)-3-hydroxyproline²² (**12**), a nonproteinogenic amino acid isolated from the hydrolysates of Mediterranean sponge,²⁴ and the seeds of *Delonix regia*,²⁵ our synthesis of **10h** thus constitutes formal asymmetric syntheses of **2** and **12**.²⁶ It is noteworthy that the present synthesis of **10h** also confirmed the 2,3-*trans*-diastereoselectivity of the reductive hydroxyalkylation of **5a** in the pyrrolidine ring.

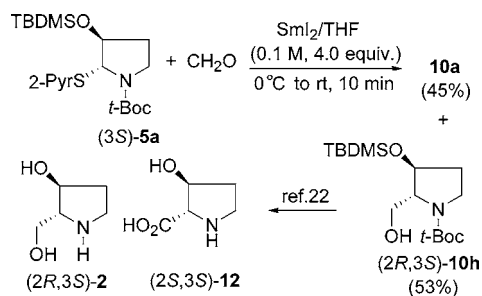
To summarize, through the present work, we were able to demonstrate that sulfide **5a** is a valuable synthetic equivalent of the samarium intermediate **D**, which can function synthetically as the hitherto unknown chiral non-racemic synthon **A**. Application of the present reductive coupling reaction to the asymmetric synthesis of more complex natural products is in progress.

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Supporting Information Available: Experimental procedures and spectral data for all new compounds and ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR spectra of compounds **5a**, **5b**, **7**, **8**, **10a–h**, **11a**, **11b**, and **11c**. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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Scheme 4. Formal Asymmetric Synthesis of Natural Products **2** and **12**



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