

Tetrahedron report number 481

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CHEMISTRY OF AMINE- AND
PHOSPHINE-BORANES**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The chemistry of organoboranes shows peculiar characteristics resulting from the electronic structure of the boron atom (three valence electrons and four atomic orbitals). Trisubstituted derivatives exist as electron-deficient trigonal entities and usually act as Lewis acids. They have a strong tendency to react with nucleophiles to give more or less stable species possessing a tetrahedral boron atom.¹ Many pertinent reviews and books have been devoted to the chemistry of these tetrasubstituted four coordinated derivatives. Most of them deal with the negatively charged organoborates that are key intermediates in the great majority of the ionic organoborane reactions.² Only a few reports or chapters in more general books are specifically concerned with neutral species³ and, to the best of our knowledge, none of them has been published since the mid-1980s, except a survey of cyclic boron-containing systems⁴ and an account of the synthesis and the reactions of some phosphine-boranes.⁵ The purpose of this review is to focus on recent advances in the preparation of neutral amine- and phosphine boranes adducts (Figure 1) and their subsequent synthetic applications. No attempt has been made to cover extensively boron heterocycles containing intramolecular N-B or N-P coordinations which were previously reviewed in 1995.⁴ Only some representative examples are given when necessary to illustrate new aspects of their chemistry.

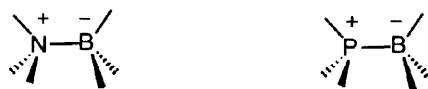
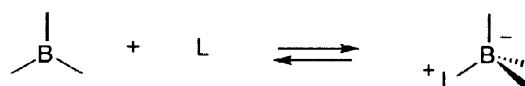


Figure 1. Neutral amine- and phosphine adducts.

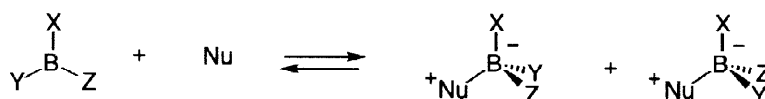
2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The exact nature of the boron-nitrogen or boron-phosphorus bond in neutral amine- and phosphine adducts has not been established univocally and may vary between two extremes. Incomplete sharing of the electron pair results in a weak bond whereas complete sharing involves a charge transfer to the boron atom resulting in a very strong bond. The stability of amine- and phosphine-boranes is therefore greatly affected by the nature of the groups directly attached both to the boron and the nitrogen or the phosphorus atoms. Some addition compounds are only stable at low temperature while others can be distilled without decomposition even at atmospheric pressure. In many cases, an equilibrium is established depending upon base and acid strengths, conditions of pressure, stoichiometry and temperature (Scheme 1).



Scheme 1

It is worth noting that ate complexes containing a stereogenic boron are created when the four substituents are different (Scheme 2).^{6,7} A number of such compounds having a single configuration at boron are known in the literature.⁷ Some of them have been directly obtained as single isomers, the others have been resolved by classical methods or by using the phenomenon of crystallization-induced asymmetric transformation. Interconversion of the two stereoisomers occurs if the complex is insufficiently stabilized. Thus, if the stereochemical information is readily stored at boron and can be used in asymmetric synthesis, it can also be readily erased.



Scheme 2

The stability of selected systems has been studied in order to establish relatively general principles. Polar effects have been underscored in the series Me_3NBF_3 , $\text{Me}_3\text{NBF}_2\text{CH}_3$, $\text{Me}_3\text{NBFMe}_2$, Me_3NBMe_3 . Trifluoroborane-trimethylamine is the most stable, the three highly electronegative fluorine atoms increasing the Lewis acidity compared to the situation where the boron was bound to electron releasing alkyl groups.⁸ However, such expectations only based on electronegativity are not always verified and it is known that the Lewis acidities of boron halides increase in the order $\text{BF}_3 < \text{BCl}_3 < \text{BBR}_3$. This behaviour has been often attributed to back-donation of charge from the $p\pi$ orbitals of halogens to that of boron, although recent computational analysis of the bonding in boron trifluoride and boron trichloride complexes with ammonia suggested that the key factor was the ability of the borane to accept an extra charge.⁹

Steric strains also directly affect the stability of the Lewis acid-base adducts. For trimethylborane-amine complexes, it can be seen from the values of the enthalpies of dissociation that the order of stability $\text{NH}_3 < \text{Me}_3\text{N} < \text{MeNH}_2 < \text{Me}_2\text{NH}$ almost fits with simple electronegative arguments. When the size of the acid changes, electronic effects can be often negated and, with tri-*t*-butylborane, complete domination of steric factors was observed, $(t\text{-Bu})_3\text{BNET}_3 < (t\text{-Bu})_3\text{BNHET}_2 < (t\text{-Bu})_3\text{BNH}_2\text{Et} < (t\text{-Bu})_3\text{BNH}_3$.¹⁰ In the field of

arylboranes, while Ph_3B has been known to give 1:1 adducts with tertiary amines, Ar_3B ($\text{Ar} = 2,6\text{-(MeO)}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_3$) only form isolable adducts with ammonia and some primary amines, but not with tertiary, secondary or *sec*-alkyl amines.¹¹

Similar studies have been carried out with phosphorus derivatives. For example, PH_3 coordinates to fluorine substituted triarylboranes $\text{B}(\text{C}_6\text{H}_x\text{F}_{5-x})_3$ to form 1:1 complexes.¹² The most stable adduct is $(\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)_3\text{BPH}_3$ where the P-B bond length ($2.046 \pm 0.002 \text{ \AA}$, compared with the sum of covalent radii 1.90 \AA) suggests a weak coordination. Accordingly, this complex releases gaseous phosphine when heated at 50°C . $(2,6\text{-F}_2\text{-C}_6\text{H}_3)_3\text{B}$ forms a weaker adduct and $(\text{C}_6\text{H}_5)_3\text{B}$ does not give any complex at all.

Determination of the kinetic parameters for dissociation of the N-B coordination bonds in intramolecular boronate- and borane-amine complexes (Figure 2) reveals that the barrier height is affected by various factors, including boron and nitrogen substituents and solvents. This barrier is reduced when *N*-methyl are replaced by *N*-ethyl groups. The strength of the B-N bond is also modified by the Lewis acidity of the boron moiety, which is known to be weaker in a boronate than in a trialkylborane.¹³ Phosphine-boranes with the P-B bond integrated into a five-, six- or seven-membered ring have been recently prepared by hydroboration of alkenyldiphenylphosphine using 9-borabicyclononane.¹⁴



Figure 2. 2-(*N,N*-dialkylaminomethyl)phenylboranes.

Numerous boron heterocycles derived from boronic and borinic esters have been prepared, thus exploiting the stabilization of the intramolecular boron-nitrogen coordination (Figure 3).^{4,15} In some cases, such as 2-pyridylthio derivatives, they can even be treated with hydrochloric acid without decomposition.

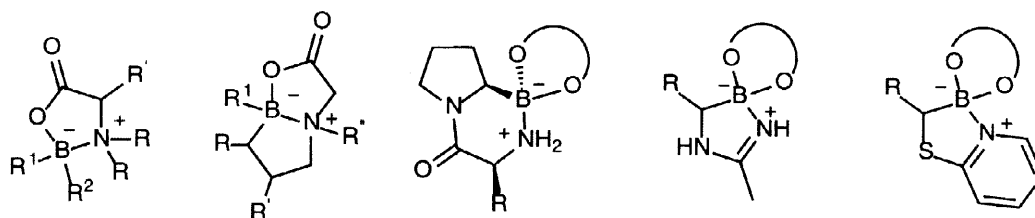


Figure 3. Some boron heterocycles with intramolecular boron-nitrogen chelation

Many theoretical and structural studies have been devoted to donor-acceptor complexes. For example, H_3NBF_3 , which was the first coordination compound of any element, synthesized in 1809 by Gay-Lussac,¹⁶ has been subjected to extensive examination. The experimental techniques employed varied from gas phase electron diffraction, X-ray diffraction, microwave, ESCA, UPS spectroscopy to vibrational spectroscopy in the gas, liquid, solid states and in cryogenic matrixes.¹⁷ A number of *ab initio* molecular orbital studies were also carried out.¹⁸ This topic with no immediate applications to organic synthesis is not developed in this review. However, it is worth noting the importance of intermolecular interaction in several amine-borane complexes resulting from unconventional B-H...H-N hydrogen bond.¹⁹

The development of the chemistry of amine- and phosphine-borane adducts is intimately coupled with the application of spectroscopic methods.²⁰ Although the final structural proof rests on X-ray analysis (B-N in the range 1.55-1.75 Å and B-P in the range 1.90-2.10 Å),²¹ NMR spectroscopy have been found to give reliable and very helpful informations in the assignment of structures^{20,22} and in the study of chemical behaviour.²³ The intramolecular complex formation has been also studied in the gas phase by UV photoelectron spectroscopy.²⁴

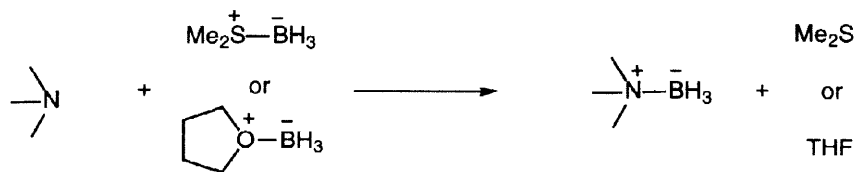
3. SYNTHESIS OF AMINE- AND PHOSPHINE-BORANES

The most obvious synthesis of amine and phosphine-borane complexes involved the simple mixing of the Lewis base and the organoborane or exchange reactions. Other methods were based on the modification of pre-existing complexes. We chose to examine the approaches dealing with the reactivity of the amine or phosphine moieties of these complexes in Section 4.4, since, in most cases, borane complexation was then used as a temporary protection or activation of the Lewis base.

3.1. Creation of a new boron-heteroatom bond

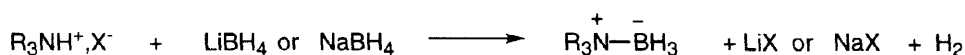
3.1.1. Amine and phosphine-BH₃

Me_3NBH_3 was first synthesized in 1937 by reaction of diborane and trimethylamine.²⁵ Since this initial discovery, a large number of complexes have been prepared from a wide range of amines. THFBH_3 or Me_2SBH_3 , which are easier to handle, are now preferred instead of diborane (Scheme 3).²⁶ Amine exchange reactions have been also reported.²⁷



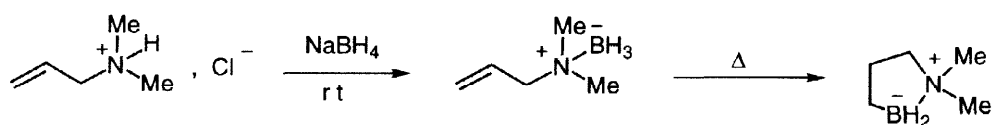
Scheme 3

Lithium or sodium borohydride are also valuable sources of borane when starting from amine salts (Scheme 4).²⁸ For the synthesis of H_3BNH_3 , best results were obtained from ammonium carbonate and sodium borohydride in THF.²⁹



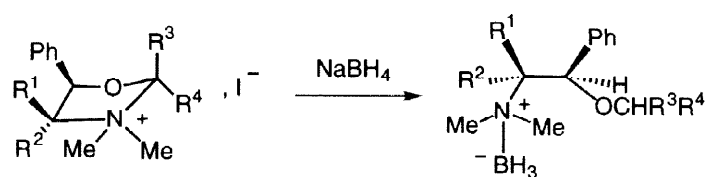
Scheme 4

Dimethylallylamine hydrochloride reacts at room temperature with sodium borohydride to afford the corresponding borane complex, while, at higher temperature, hydroboration occurs giving an azaborolidine (Scheme 5).³⁰



Scheme 5

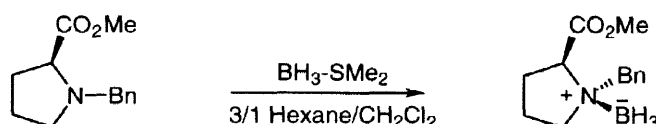
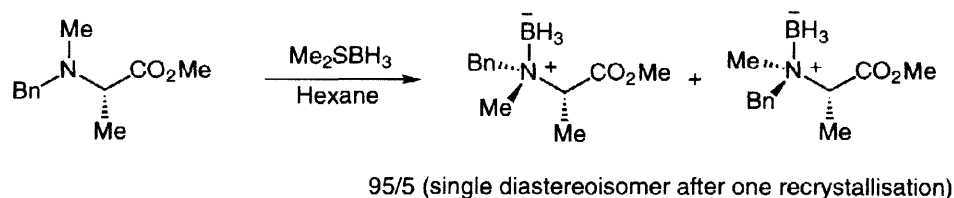
Regioselective reductive ring opening of oxazolidinium methiodides can be achieved in the presence of sodium borohydride in dimethoxyethane (Scheme 6).³¹



Scheme 6

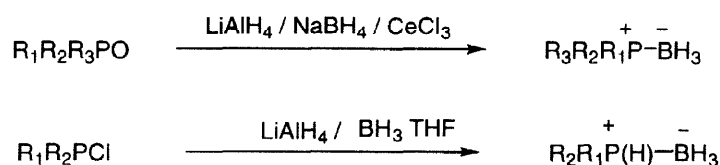
When the amine have three different substituents and a stereogenic carbon, borane complexation can afford a mixture of diastereomeric adducts, which can be separated by simple selective crystallization or column chromatography.³² In the case of methyl (*S*)-*N*-benzyl-*N*-methylalaninate, it was possible to obtain selectively one isomer using the

phenomenon of crystallisation-induced asymmetric transformation (Scheme 7).³³ (*S*)-*N*-benzylproline methyl ester gave a single diastereoisomer with BH_3 and CO_2Me *cis* to each other.³⁴



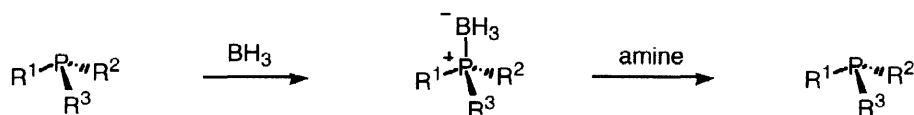
Scheme 7

As with their amino analogues, phosphine-borane adducts usually have been synthesized from borane dimethyl sulfide or borane tetrahydrofuran complexes. Amine-boranes can be also used for exchange reactions provided that amine is removed by distillation.³⁵ Corrosive and air-sensitive phosphines were best generated *in situ* from phosphine oxides or chlorophosphines (Scheme 8).^{36,37}



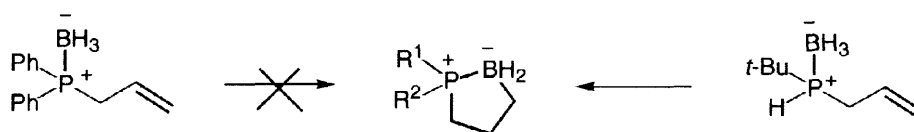
Scheme 8

The boronation of P-chiral phosphines occurred with complete preservation of the stereochemical integrity at phosphorus. When required, chiral non-racemic phosphine-boranes can be obtained in high enantiomeric purity by recrystallization. Liberation of the enantiomerically pure phosphines was achieved from the corresponding boranes complexes with retention of configuration (see Section 4.4) (Scheme 9).



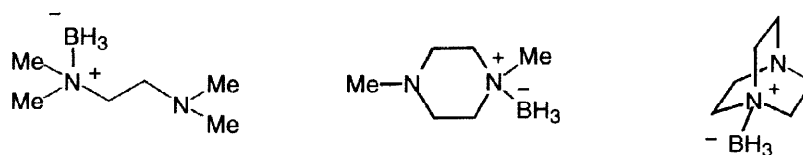
Scheme 9

A large number of primary, secondary and tertiary phosphines, phosphites, oxazaphospholidines, aza- and diazaphospholes and monochlorophosphines give stable adducts with BH_3 .³⁸ Chemoselective borane addition to phosphines occurred in the presence of other functional groups such as alkyne, ester, nitrile,³⁹ and phosphonate groups.⁴⁰ Alkenyl, allyl and 3-butenyldiphenylphosphines are also readily converted into their monoborane adducts. No cyclic product can be obtained even on prolonged thermal treatment, while the allyl-*t*-butylphosphine derivative gives internal hydroboration at 30°C (Scheme 10).^{38,41,42} The formation of dihydrophosphinine-borane complex was accompanied by reductive side-reactions giving rise to saturated derivatives.⁴³



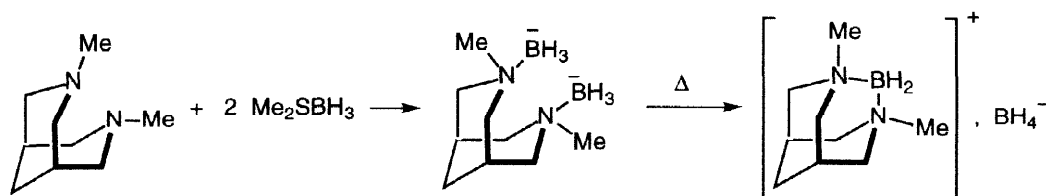
Scheme 10

Mono- and bis- BH_3 adducts of diamines have also received attention and it has been reported that tetramethylethylenediamine, *N,N*-dimethylpiperazine and 1,4-diazabicyclo-[2.2.2]octane each form a monoadduct that can be isolated and characterized (Scheme 11).⁴⁴



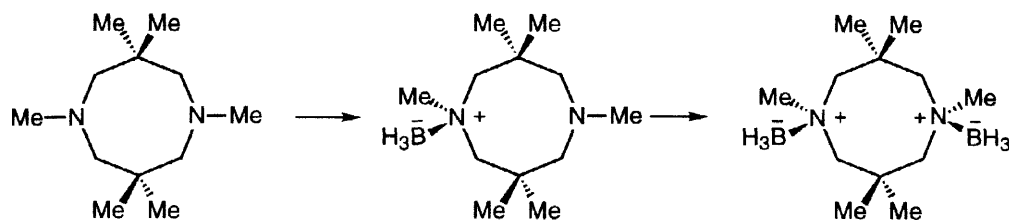
Scheme 11

Bis-chelation was observed with 3,7-dimethyl-3,7-diazabicyclo[3.3.1]nonane, which reacted with two equivalents of borane-dimethylsulfide to give a high melting point solid.⁴⁵ Heating this compound at 100°C in the solid state led to a new product, which is a member of a class of boron-containing cations of the type BH_2L_2^+ , first examined by Miller and Muetterties (Scheme 12).⁴⁶



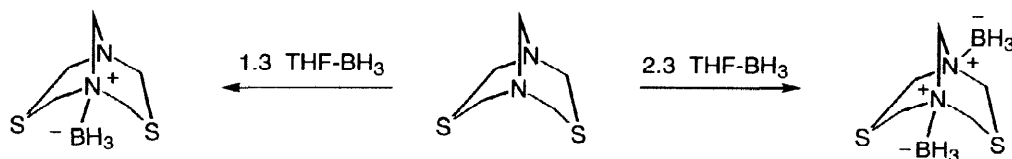
Scheme 12

For 1,3,3,5,7,7-hexamethyl-1,5-diazacyclooctane, the monoborane adduct was present, but the bis-adduct was the major product. Its structure was determined by X-ray crystallography to be a twist-boat-boat with the BH₃ groups *cis* (Scheme 13).



Scheme 13

Although there are four donor sites in 1,5-dithia-3,7-diazabicyclo-[3.3.1]nonane only mono- and di-*N*-coordinations were observed depending on the amount of borane (Scheme 14).⁴⁷ Evaporation of the solvent caused partial decomplexation. This fact can be attributed to the very open angles around the nitrogen atoms that does not favour a strong coordination. The N-B bond is weaker in the bisadduct due to the presence of an important electron withdrawing effect resulting from the coordination of the other nitrogen atom. This was also observed with imidazolidines.⁴⁸

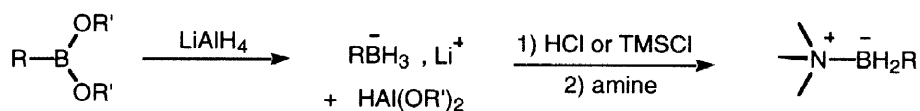


Scheme 14

A series of phosphine-BH₃ derived from bis(diphenylphosphino)alkanes have been also synthesized.⁴⁹ Only bis(borane) adducts were isolated, with the exception of 1,2-bis((*S,S*)-2,4-dimethylphosphetano)benzene, which was shown to form the monoborane derivative.⁵⁰ Analogous partially or fully borylated adducts were obtained from polyphosphines.⁵¹

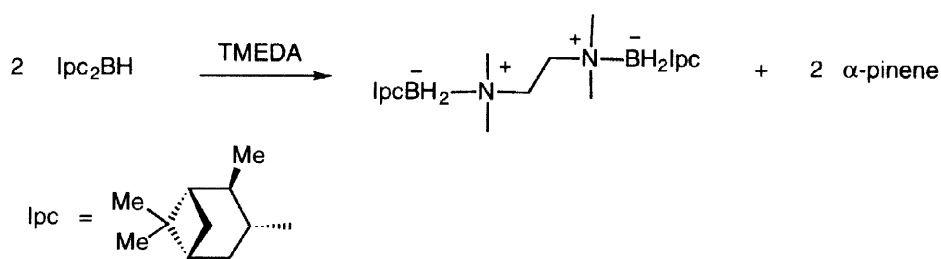
3.1.2. Amine- and phosphine-H₂BR

Monoorganylborane complexes have been prepared by addition of the amine to the corresponding borane, first generated from boroxines,⁵² 2-alkyl-1,3,2-benzodioxaboroles⁵³ or boronic esters (Scheme 15).⁵⁴



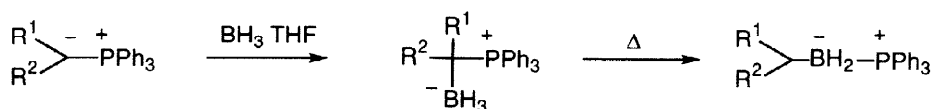
Scheme 15

Monoalkylborane-amine complexes were also readily available by dehydroboration of thexylmonoalkylboranes.⁵⁵ Similarly, *N,N,N',N'*-tetramethylethylenediamine displaces α -pinene to produce the solid 1/2 adduct of the base and monoisopinocampheylborane (Scheme 16).⁵⁶



Scheme 16

In a different approach, alkylidetriphenylphosphoranes add BH_3 to give a stable phosphonium salts, which rearrange on heating to afford monoalkylborane-triphenylphosphine adducts (Scheme 17).⁵⁷



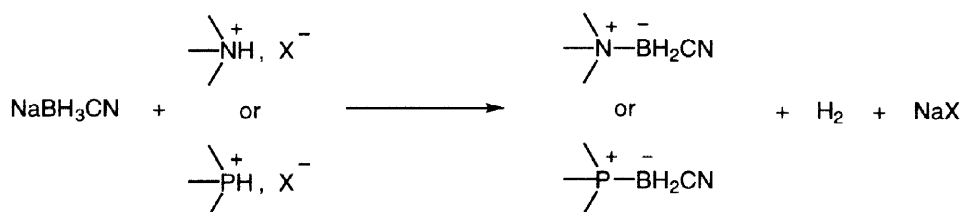
Scheme 17

Amine-cyanoborane complexes were first prepared from sodium cyanoborohydride. Addition of hydrochloric acid in THF was followed by an exchange reaction to afford the amine adduct (Scheme 18).⁵⁸



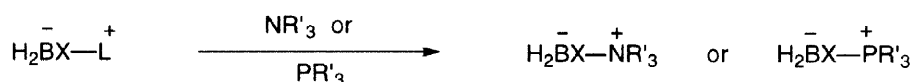
Scheme 18

This method was later improved by employing ammonium or phosphonium salts to introduce simultaneously the amine and the acid. A number of amine and phosphine-cyanoboranes were prepared by using this efficient and practical route (Scheme 19).⁵⁹



Scheme 19

A variety of monosubstituted borane adducts have been also obtained by amine or phosphine exchange reactions from an appropriate substrate (Scheme 20).^{60,61}



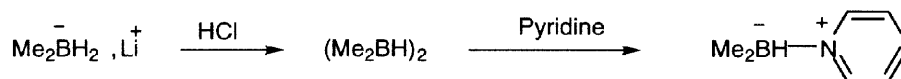
L = Et₂O, Me₂S, NR₃, PR₃

X = halogen, CN, CO₂H, ...

Scheme 20

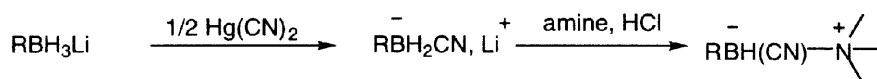
3.1.3. Amine- and phosphine-HBRR'

Except in a few cases, dialkylboranes readily disproportionate. Therefore, as their monoalkyl congeners, they were mostly prepared *in situ* from R₂BH₂Li and stabilized by complexation (Scheme 21).⁶²



Scheme 21

Trimethylamine- and pyridine- monoalkylcyanoboranes have been synthesised from the corresponding borohydride and the amine hydrochloride (Scheme 22).⁶³

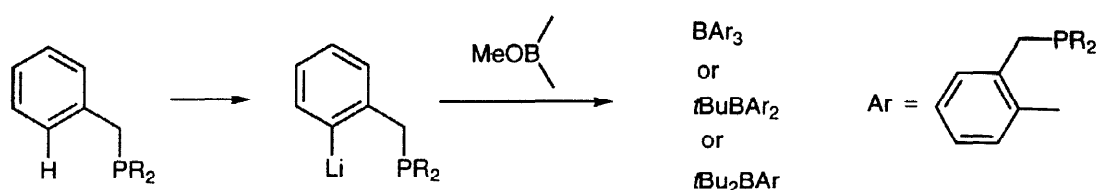


Scheme 22

As monohalogenoboranes, dihalogenoboranes easily add amines or phosphines. In the case of difluoroborane derivatives, the initial formation of the 1/1 adducts was followed by redistribution reactions.⁶⁴

3.1.4. Amine- and phosphine-BR₃

As previously described, the addition compounds were readily obtained from the corresponding amine or phosphine and the trisubstituted boranes (trialkylboranes,⁶⁵ trihalogenoboranes,⁶⁶ boroxines,⁶⁷ triarylboron compounds⁶⁸). Ortholithiation of (diphenylphosphinomethyl)benzene (ArH) has been used to prepare the sterically crowded cyclic phosphine-boranes BAR₃, *t*BuBAR₂ and *t*Bu₂BAR from the lithiated ligand LiAr and B(OMe)₃, *t*BuB(OMe)₂ and *t*Bu₂BOMe, respectively (Scheme 23).⁶⁹ Intramolecular chelation was observed for *t*BuBAR₂ and *t*Bu₂BAR, while the steric bulk in BAR₃ led to the formation of oligomers in solution.



Scheme 23

The reactivity of diborane compounds B₂(1,2-E₂C₆H₄)₂ (E=O or S) has also been studied with respect to their ability to coordinate Lewis bases. Mono- and bis adducts of 4-methylpyridine, phenyldimethylphosphine and triethylphosphine have been isolated (Figure 4).⁷⁰

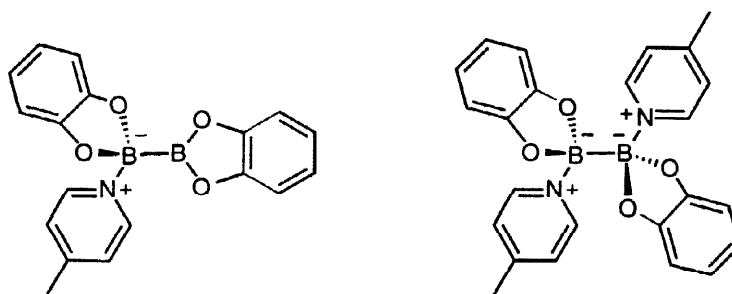
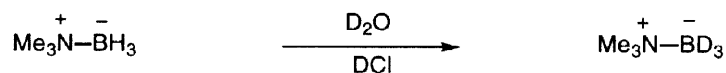


Figure 4 . Mono- and bis adducts of diborane compounds

Finally, the transformation of perfluoroalkyl derivatives of tricoordinate boron into tetracoordinate species has also been reported. Trifluoromethyl boron compounds behave in an entirely specific fashion and a recent overview presented the preparation and the reactivity of trifluoromethyl-substituted borane-amine adducts.⁷¹

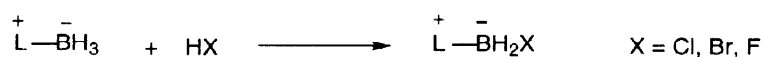
3.2. Modification of a preexisting complex

The boron hydrogens of borane-trimethylamine undergo a rapid exchange with deuterium much faster than hydrolysis when this complex is stirred with acidic deuterium oxide (Scheme 24).⁷²



Scheme 24

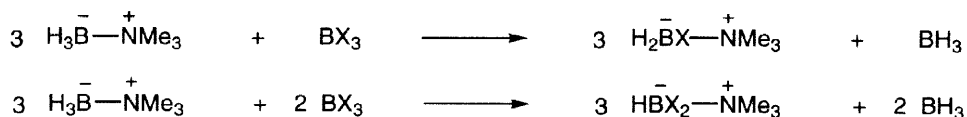
Monohalogenated amine- and phosphine borane complexes were obtained by treatment of the parent derivative with hydrogen halide (Scheme 25).^{73, 74, 75, 76, 77}



L = amine or phosphine

Scheme 25

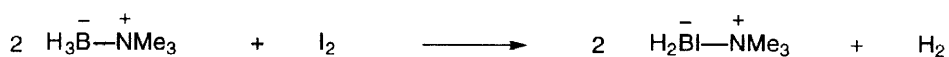
Boron halides can also be used as halogenating agents, mono- or dihalogeno derivatives being then produced depending upon stoichiometry. This redistribution reaction apparently occurred without cleavage of the boron-nitrogen bond (Scheme 26).^{73,76,78,79,80}

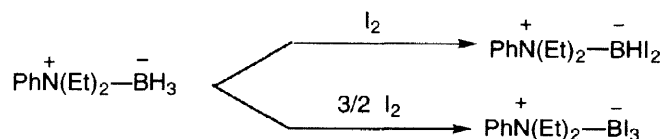


X = Br, Cl

Scheme 26

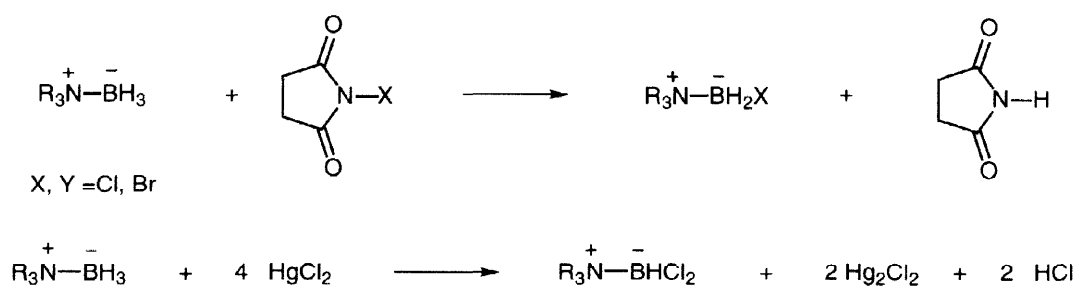
Direct action of halogen also yielded amine- and phosphine-haloboranes. Chlorine reacted vigorously with trimethylamine-borane in benzene solution while bromination and iodination were not so fast.^{73,75,77} With a ratio complex/iodine = 2/1, the amine-monoiodoborane was isolated. Di- and triiodoborane adducts have been generated provided different ratios were used (Scheme 27).⁸¹





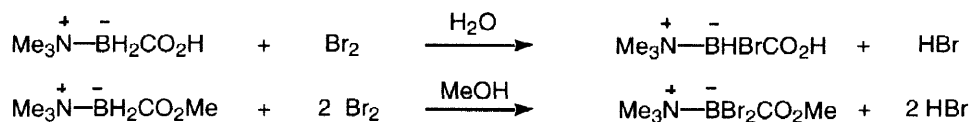
Scheme 27

Several other reagents such as *N*-halosuccinimides,^{82,79} mercuric chloride,⁸³ hypochlorous acid,⁸⁴ or halocarbons⁸⁵ have been also successfully investigated for the preparation of mono- or polyhaloborane complexes (Scheme 28).



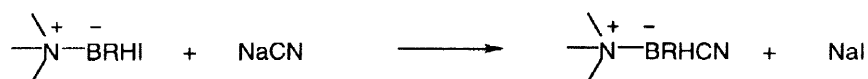
Scheme 28

Amine-carboxyboranes were readily decarbonylated with bromide in dichloromethane to produce amine-dibromoboranes, while in protic solvents such as water, only substitution takes place giving bromocarboxyboranes complexes (Scheme 29).⁸⁶



Scheme 29

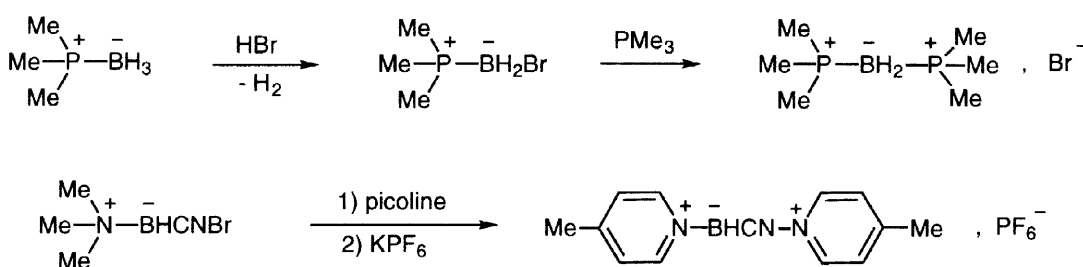
Exchange reactions of halogens with various anionic nucleophiles have been investigated as efficient routes to new complexes.^{87,88} For example, trimethylamine-monoiodoborane and sodium cyanide led to the corresponding cyanoborane,⁸⁹ which can be also conveniently prepared by treatment of borane complexes with mercuric cyanide⁹⁰ (Scheme 30).



Scheme 30

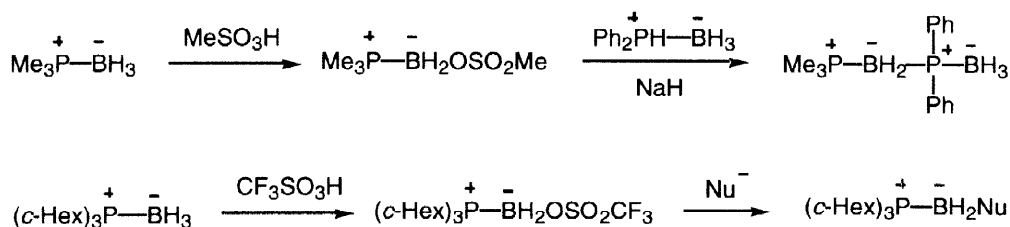
Boron trichloride adducts reacted with pseudohalide salts MX (X=NCO, NCS) to afford completely substituted products. According to the stoichiometry, either mixed species or tetrapseudohaloborate anions were obtained.⁹¹

The introduction of a second trialkylphosphine moiety at the boron atom of phosphine borane complexes led to symmetrical cations which have been the source of a coordination chemistry.⁹² Bis-amine cations have been synthesized likewise from bromocyanohydroboranes while dibromocyanoboranes did not react with amines even under harsher conditions (Scheme 31).⁹³ A boronium ion analogue of the tropane ring system has been prepared from homopiperazine and bromoborane-dimethylsulfide.⁹⁴



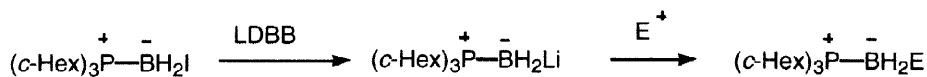
Scheme 31

Phosphine-boranes reacted with methanesulfonic or trifluoromethanesulfonic acid to give the corresponding sulfonates. Various substitution products were obtained by addition of nucleophiles to these highly reactive species (Scheme 32).⁹⁵



Scheme 32

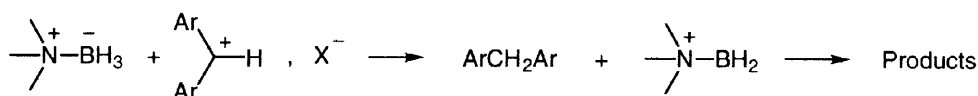
The generation of tricoordinate boron anions has been achieved from tricyclohexylphosphine-monoiodoborane and lithium 4,4'-di-*tert*-butylbiphenylide (LDBB). The addition of a variety of electrophiles afforded new phosphine-boranes possessing a substituent at the boron atom (Scheme 33).⁹⁶



E = D, SiMe₃, RX, aldehyde, ketone, epoxide, ester, disulfide, ...

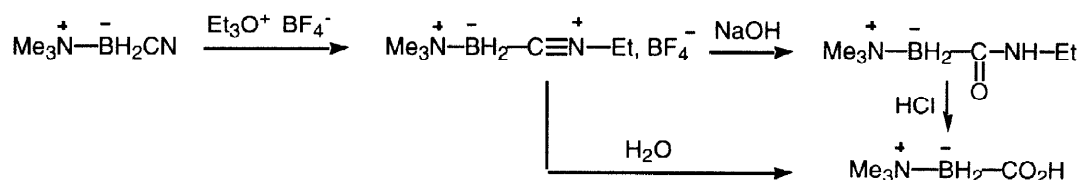
Scheme 33

The kinetics and mechanism of hydride abstractions from trialkylamine boranes with benzydryl cations have been determined photometrically (Scheme 34).⁹⁷ Borenium ions, generated from 2,3-benzaborolidines and trityl salts, are exceptionally potent electrophiles.⁹⁸



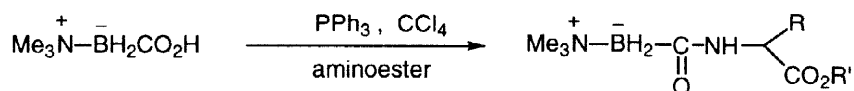
Scheme 34

A number of boron analogues of amino acid betaines (see Section 5.1) have been synthesized from a cyanoborane precursor by addition of triethyloxonium tetrafluoroborate. Basic hydrolysis gave the corresponding amide while the acid can be directly obtained from the nitrilium salt and water (Scheme 35).⁹⁹ Other alkylating agents, such as *t*-butyl chloride in the presence of antimony pentachloride, have also been employed.¹⁰⁰



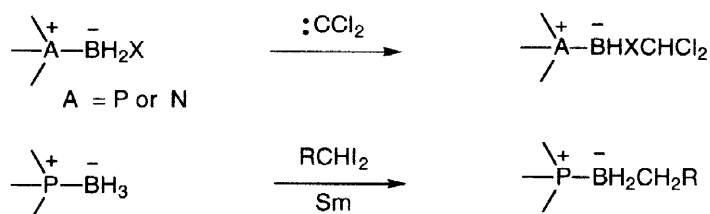
Scheme 35

Esters derivatives have been prepared by a variety of routes including the direct treatment of a nitrilium salt with an alcohol¹⁰¹ and the esterification of the corresponding boron amino acid.¹⁰² A number of boron-containing di- and tripeptides were synthesized by condensation reactions in the presence of triphenylphosphine and carbon tetrachloride (Scheme 36).¹⁰³



Scheme 36

Dichlorocarbene has been found to insert into the boron-hydrogen bond of triarylphosphine-borane adducts.¹⁰⁴ Other various functionalized amine- and phosphine borane complexes were later prepared by this method¹⁰⁵ and, more recently, methylene insertion has been reported with samarium carbenoids (Scheme 37).¹⁰⁶



Scheme 37

4. REACTIVITY

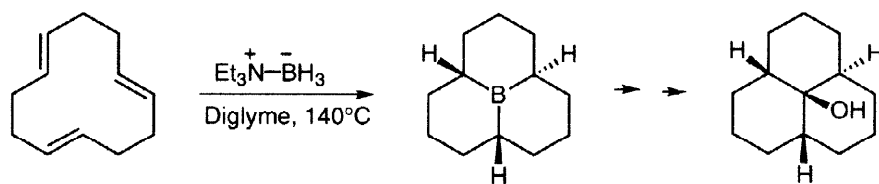
4.1. Hydrolysis

Most of borane-aliphatic amine complexes are quite stable in water and alcohols at near neutrality and room temperature while aryl amine derivatives are less stable and usually react with protic media and moist air.¹⁰⁷ As a general rule, the reactivity of the donor base-borane adducts is highly sensitive to structural variations both in the donor moiety and in the coordination sphere of boron. The kinetics of solvolysis in acidic media have been the subject of numerous investigations.¹⁰⁸

Phosphine-borane complexes appear to be more resistant to hydrolysis than their corresponding amino analogues. For example, triphenylphosphine-borane is a crystalline solid which is unchanged after six months on the open bench and it was reported to resist 3M HCl at 150°C for 3h.¹⁰⁹

4.2. Borane complexes as hydroborating agents

Amine- and phosphine-borane complexes are notably more stable than the usual hydroborating reagents such as borane-tetrahydrofuran or borane-dimethylsulphide. But, if they are easily handled, they concomitantly show a lower reactivity toward alkenes and alkynes.^{107,110} The hydroboration reaction proceeds *via* a prior dissociation mechanism and the ease of addition greatly varies with the strength of the complex.^{111,112} When it is necessary to heat, the slow generation of borane can then be an advantage, as in the synthesis of polycyclic organoboranes (Scheme 38).¹¹³



Scheme 38

Relatively drastic conditions can also cause undesired substantial isomerisations,¹¹⁴ which can be suppressed by co-addition of alkylating agents, Lewis acids or elemental sulfur.¹¹⁵

More reactive adducts might be expected with relatively hindered alkylamines or less basic arylamines. Indeed, borane-dialkylphenylamine complexes hydroborate alk-1-enes without heating,^{112,116} and selective hydroboration of monosubstituted alkene over disubstituted olefin has been achieved using *N,N*-diethylaniline-diiodoborane at room temperature.¹¹⁷ New hydroborating agents have been prepared from silylamine-boranes.¹¹⁸

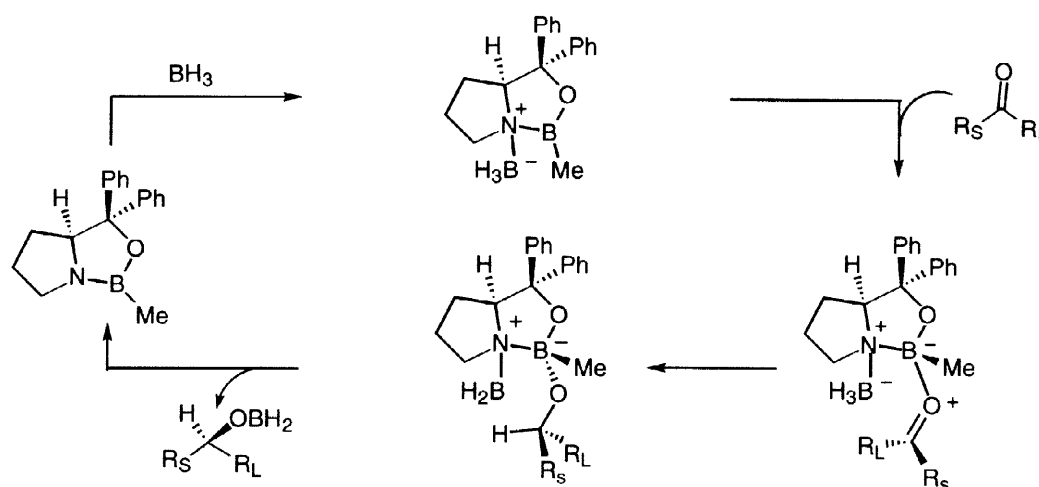
Borane-diethylaniline complex has been also used to promote the formation of alkenyl boronic esters from alk-1-ynes¹¹⁹ and to prepare dialkylketones from alkenes in the presence of cobalt chloride and carbon monoxide.¹²⁰

4.3. Borane complexes as reducing agents

Although amine boranes have been known for many years, some of them being commercially available, their use as reducing agents has only been really recognized since the late 1970's.^{107,110} They often required acidic or relatively harsh conditions to show a satisfactory reactivity. Recent investigations with more reactive complexes have demonstrated a variety of useful and unique reducing abilities, which nicely complements those of other organoborane reagents.^{112,121}

Chiral amine-borane complexes have been reported to reduce aromatic ketones in the presence of Lewis acid with modest enantioselectivity (e.e. $\leq 57\%$).¹²² By contrast, following the pioneering work of the group of Itsuno,¹²³ considerable improvements were introduced by Corey and co-workers by simple modifications such as the use of the oxazaborolidine derived from (*S*)-2-(diphenylhydroxymethyl)pyrrolidine as a catalyst in the presence of borane tetrahydrofuran.¹²⁴ The mechanism of the reduction was assumed to involve an amine-borane complex, X-ray structure of which was recently determined (Scheme 39).¹²⁵ In the postulated

transition state, the carbonyl oxygen coordinates the boron atom of the oxazaborolidine ring *cis* to the BH₃ and intramolecular hydride transfer occurs selectively to a single face of the ketone.



Scheme 39

For the enzyme-like behaviour of the oxazaborolidine, which brings together the reductant and the carbonyl substrate, these boron heterocycles have been named ‘chemzymes’. Numerous syntheses have been carried out taking advantage of this major advance in the enantioselective reduction of prochiral ketones to secondary alcohols.¹²⁶ Terpenic azaborocyclohexanes¹²⁷ and oxazaphospholidines¹²⁸ complexed with BH₃ have also been reported more recently as promising enantioselective reducing agents (Figure 5).

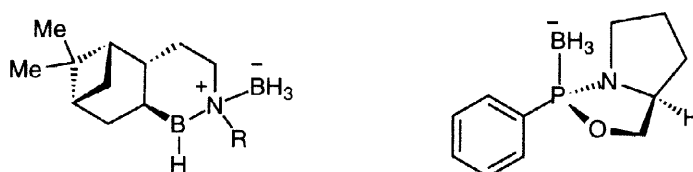
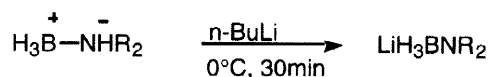


Figure 5. Azaborocyclohexane- and oxazaphospholidine-borane complexes

Lithium aminoborohydrides are a new class of powerful reducing agents comparable in power with lithium aluminium hydride.¹²⁹ These non-pyrophoric and thermally stable species were easily prepared in large scale from almost any amine-borane complexes, thus allowing control of the steric and electronic environment of these reagents (Scheme 40).

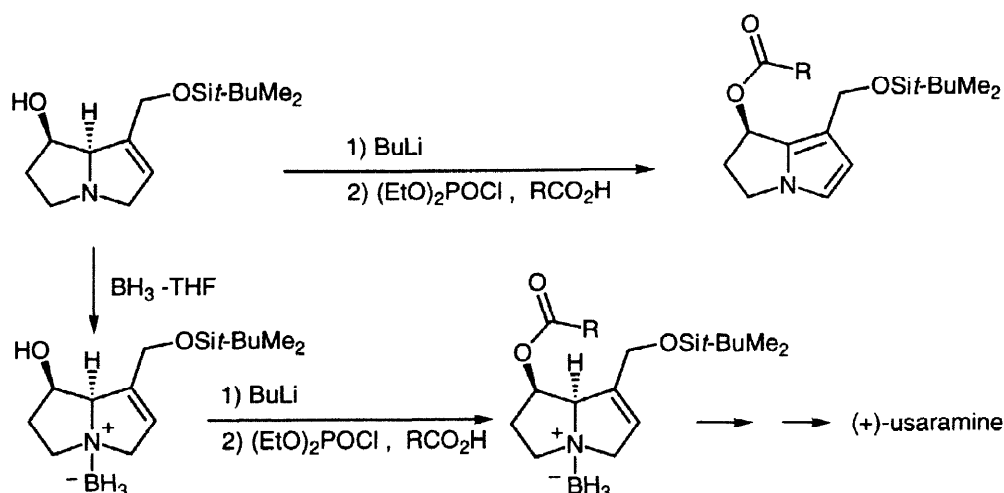


Scheme 40

A number of other reductive processes involving *N,N*-diethylaniline-halogeno-boranes have been also described : reductive dimerization of sulfonyl chlorides to disulfides, deoxygenation of sulfoxides,¹³⁰ reductions of amides, iodination of alcohols, reductive iodinations of ketones and carboxylic acids,¹³¹ cleavage of ethers, geminal diacetates,¹³² and lactones¹³³, hydroiodic acid addition to alkenes and alkynes.¹³⁴

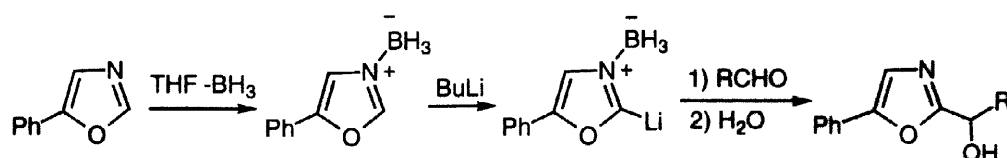
4.4. BH_3 as a protecting or an activating group of amines and phosphines

Borane complexation of amines appears to be a useful method for preventing undesired reactions. For example, anhydrovinblastine- BH_3 has the advantage of being highly stable, while the base is known to be oxidized quickly and spontaneously by air oxygen into leucosine.¹³⁵ The formation of a considerable amount of pyrrole in the synthesis of (+)-usaramine was suppressed when the pyrrolizidine intermediate was first treated with borane-THF (Scheme 41).¹³⁶ In the case of dihydroconessine, selective protection of the dimethylamino group prevented reactions of cyanogen bromide and perbenzoic acid with the pyrrolidine moiety.¹³⁷



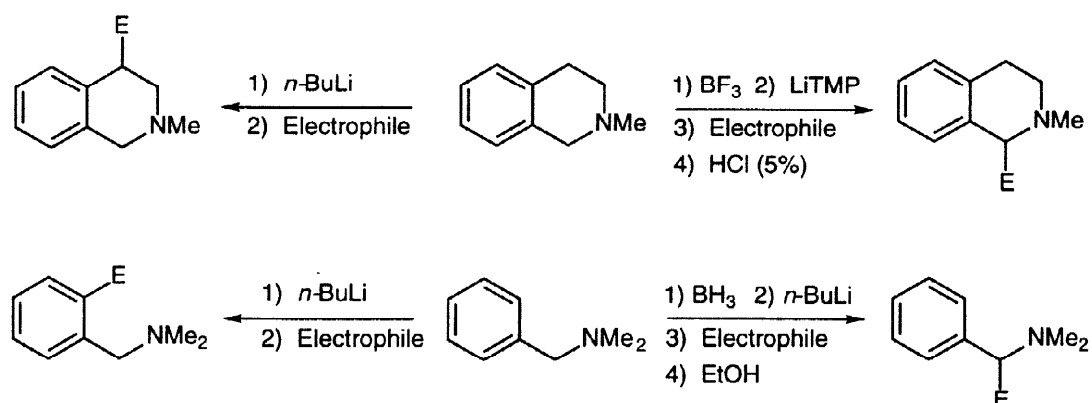
Scheme 41

Attempts to trap 2-lithiooxazoles with electrophiles contend with complications due to electrocyclic ring opening process. This troublesome anionic reaction is completely suppressed using a borane derivative (Scheme 42).¹³⁸ Direct access to lithiated aziridine-borane complexes has been also reported.¹³⁹

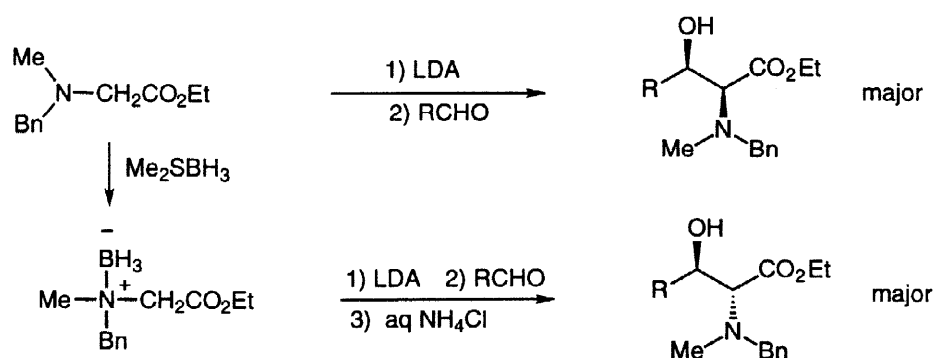


Scheme 42

Boron complexation has also found valuable synthetic applications in the activation of tertiary amines.¹⁴⁰ α -Deprotonation is promoted and a number of α -amino carbanions can then be efficiently generated and trapped by various electrophiles, mostly with a modification of the regiochemical course of the reaction (Scheme 43).¹⁴¹ Lewis acid addition also selectively affected the *anti/syn* ratio in aldol reactions of ethyl *N*-benzyl-*N*-methylglycinate (Scheme 44).¹⁴²



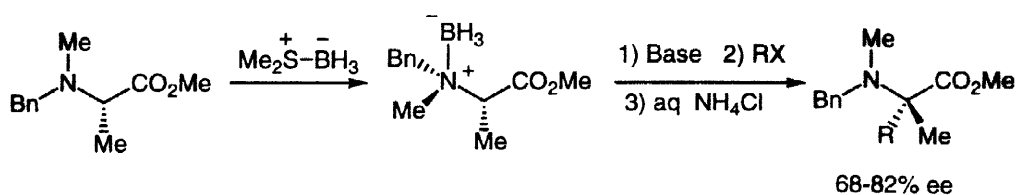
Scheme 43



Scheme 44

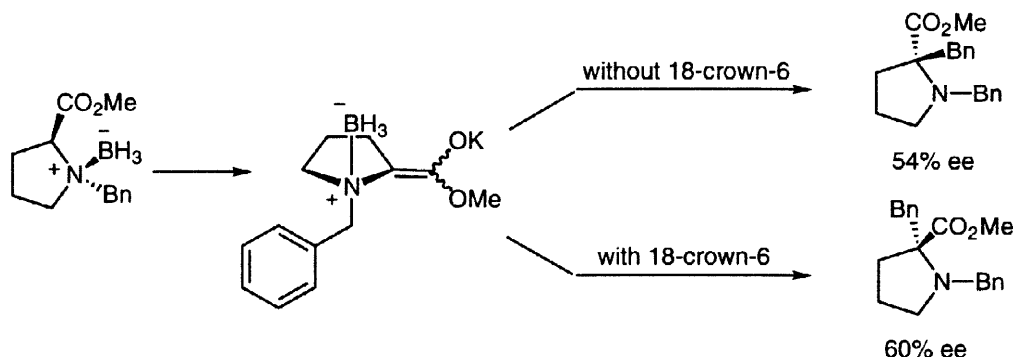
A pertinent review of this topic appeared very recently¹⁴³ and we have only selected some representative examples with regard to asymmetric synthesis. Alkylation of alanine

derivatives possessing a temporary stereogenic nitrogen atom afforded, after aqueous workup, disubstituted amino esters in enantiomeric purities up to 82% (Scheme 45).¹⁴⁴



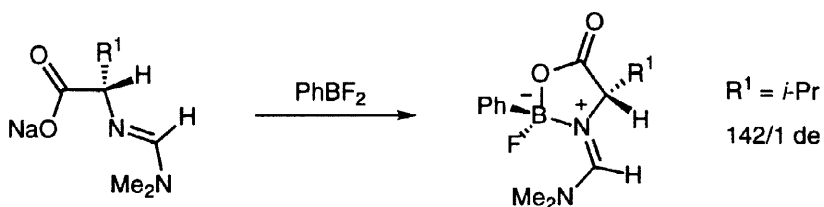
Scheme 45

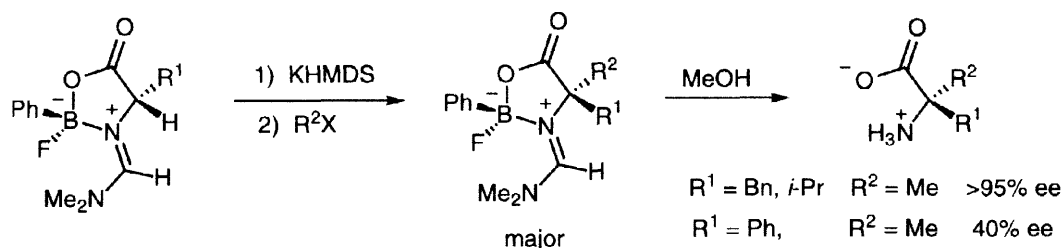
Inversion of the diastereoselectivity was observed in the reaction of potassium enolate of (*S*)-*N*-benzylproline methyl ester-BH₃ adduct in the presence *versus* in the absence of a crown ether (Scheme 46).¹⁴⁵



Scheme 46

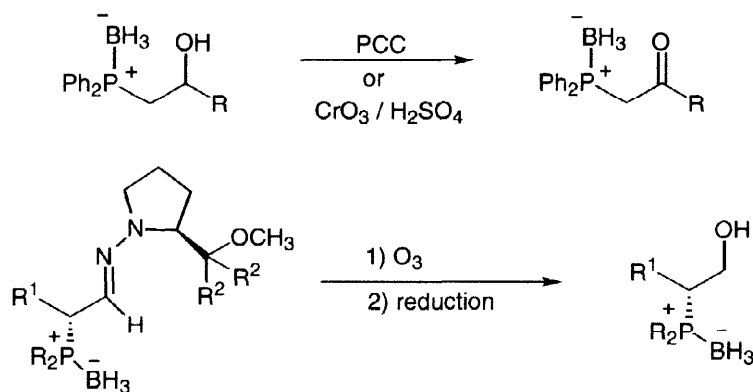
Another interesting approach has been reported in the deprotonation of oxazaborolidinones, which can also serve as chiral equivalents of amino acid enolates. Crystallization of a mixture of phenyldifluoroborane and α -amidino carboxylates under conditions of second-order asymmetric transformation results in nearly complete conversion of the less soluble isomer. This technique affords relatively stable complexes having a single configuration at the stereogenic boron. Reaction of the corresponding potassium enolates with electrophiles allowed the synthesis of chiral α,α -dialkyl amino acids with high levels of optical purity (Scheme 47).¹⁴⁶





Scheme 47

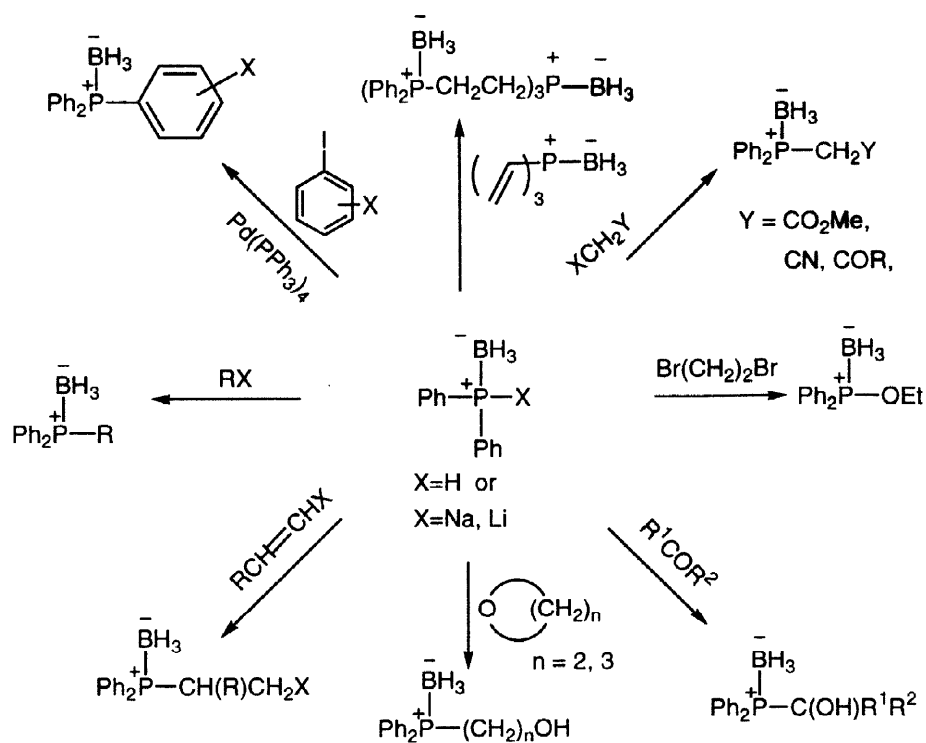
As for their nitrogen analogues, BH_3 can serve as protective group of phosphines during purification procedures¹⁴⁷ or during chemical manipulations such as alcohol¹⁴⁸ or hydrazone oxidation,¹⁴⁹ alkylation,¹⁵⁰ organozinc additions¹⁵¹ or Wittig reactions¹⁴⁶ (Scheme 48). The electrosynthesis of a polypyrrole film bearing a diphosphine substituent protected from oxidation by borane complexation recently has been described.¹⁵²



Scheme 48

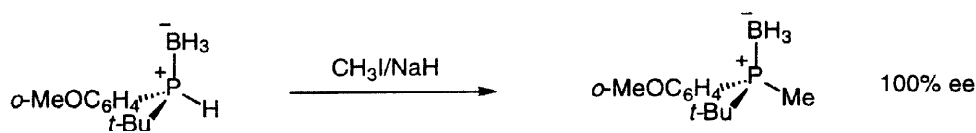
It is noteworthy that the addition of borane occurs with retention of configuration at the phosphorus atom.¹⁵³ The deboronation is also stereospecific and can be done with various reagents (Et_2NH ¹⁵⁴, morpholine,¹⁵⁵ DABCO¹⁵⁶, HBF_4),¹⁵⁷ Quaternary phosphonium salts have been directly prepared from the corresponding borane complex by treatment with an alkylating agent in the presence of oct-1-ene.¹⁵⁸

Besides a simple role of protection, complexation of phosphines with BH_3 has attracted the interest of several research groups because of the peculiar chemical properties of the resulting adducts. Secondary phosphine-boranes were easily deprotonated to give the corresponding anion, which have also been generated from triphenylphosphine- BH_3 .¹⁵⁹ Treatment with a variety of electrophiles afforded new functionalized complexes in good yields (Scheme 49).

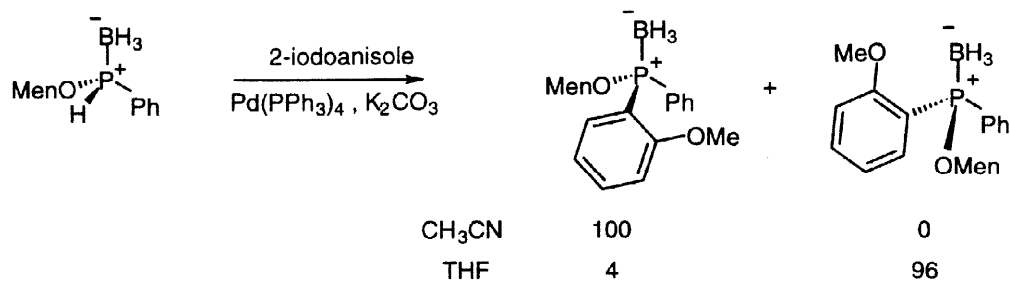


Scheme 49

In the synthesis of *P*-substituted-*o*-anisylcyclohexyl-(or *t*-butyl)phosphine-borane, the alkylation reaction occurred with retention of configuration (Scheme 50).¹⁶⁰ In contrast, the specificity of the palladium-catalyzed arylation reaction depended largely on the solvent and the base used (Scheme 51).¹⁶¹

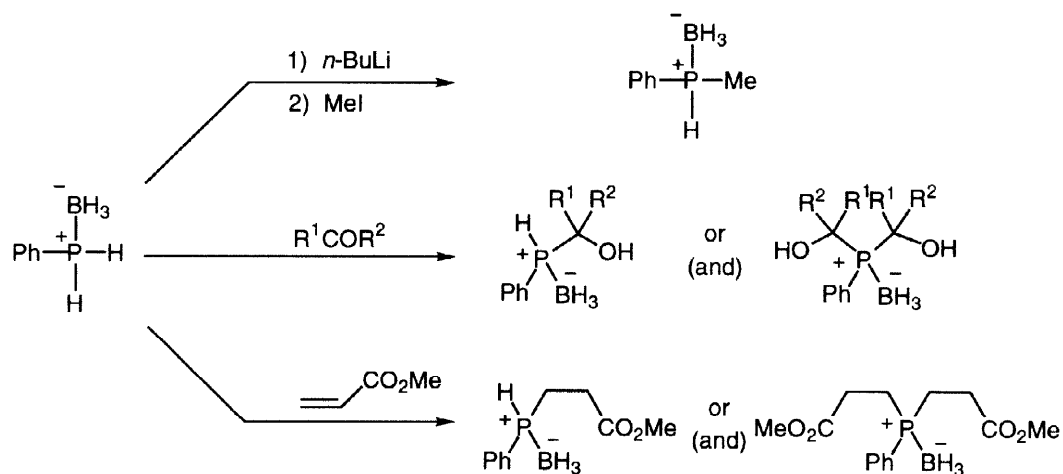


Scheme 50



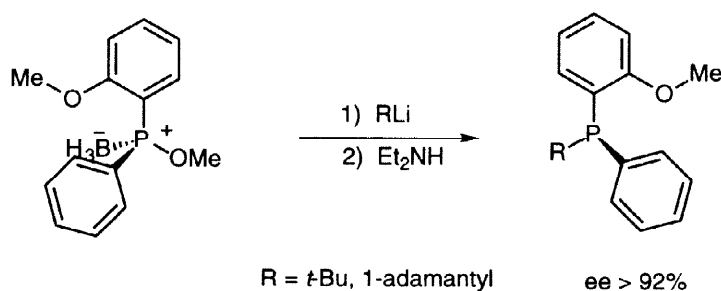
Scheme 51

P-H activation has been also applied in the case of primary phosphines. After treatment with *n*-butyllithium, alkylation with methyl iodide proceeded in high yield while hydrophosphination of carbonyl derivatives was carried out under neutral conditions.¹⁶² Reactions with α,β -unsaturated esters afforded in reasonable yields either the mono- or the bis-adducts (Scheme 52).¹⁶³



Scheme 52

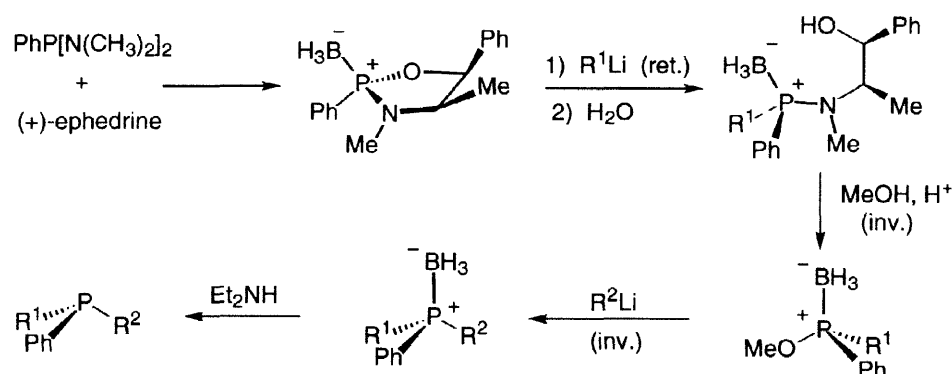
The reactions of optically active menthylloxymethylphenylphosphine-borane with organolithium compounds afforded the corresponding substitution products with high stereoselectivity and inversion of configuration.¹⁶⁴ In this way, bulky residues were introduced to give tertiary phosphines in greater than 92% ee (Scheme 53).¹⁶⁵



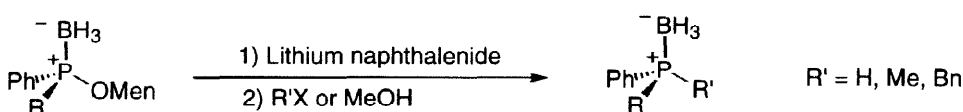
Scheme 53

A successful sequential double displacement was based on the use of pure diastereomeric crystalline oxazaphospholidines as precursors to chiral non-racemic phosphines. At low temperature, alkyl and aryl lithium reagents afforded the corresponding phosphinamides by stereoselective P-O bond cleavage, with retention of configuration at the phosphorus atom.

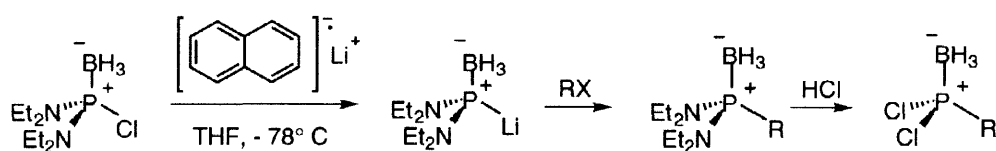
Acid methanolysis, followed by reactions with different organolithium compounds, yielded products in high enantiomeric excess that have been further increased by recrystallisation (Scheme 54).¹⁶⁶ The regio- and stereochemistry of nucleophilic attack at the *P*-chiral center of a dioxaphospholane-borane complex has also been studied by the same group.¹⁶⁷



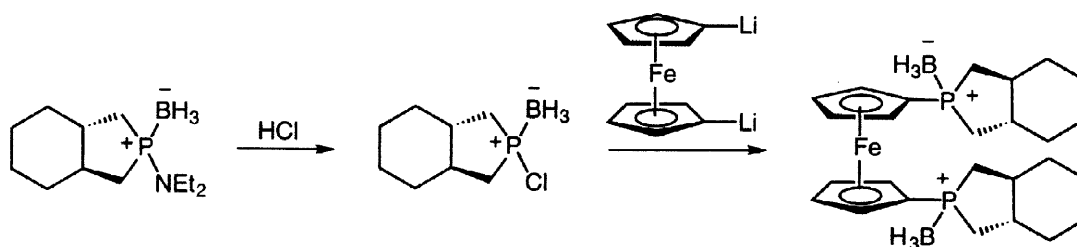
Diastereoisomerically pure phosphine-boranes possessing a menthyloxy group were reduced by lithium naphthalenide with cleavage of the P-O bond. The subsequent reaction with electrophiles afforded the corresponding tertiary phosphine-boranes with good to excellent enantiomeric excess (Scheme 55).¹⁶⁸



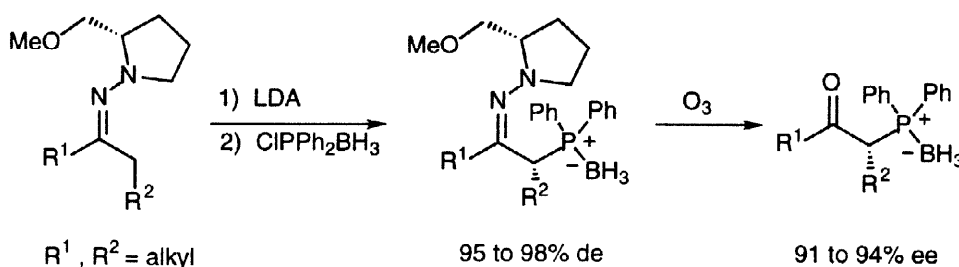
In a related approach, lithiated bis-(diethylamino)phosphine-borane complex undergoes nucleophilic substitution with various organic halides in good yields. Interestingly, the amino groups can be readily replaced by chloride to afford dichlorophosphine-borane complexes (Scheme 56).¹⁶⁹



These intermediates and their monochloro analogues, which can also be prepared by direct complexation of the corresponding phosphines with BH_3 , were found to be excellent precursors for further chemistry.¹⁷⁰ They have been converted into triorganophosphines by addition of organometallics (Scheme 57)^{169,171,172} or used in the synthesis of α -phosphanyl ketones and 2-phosphanyl alcohols (Scheme 58).¹⁷³

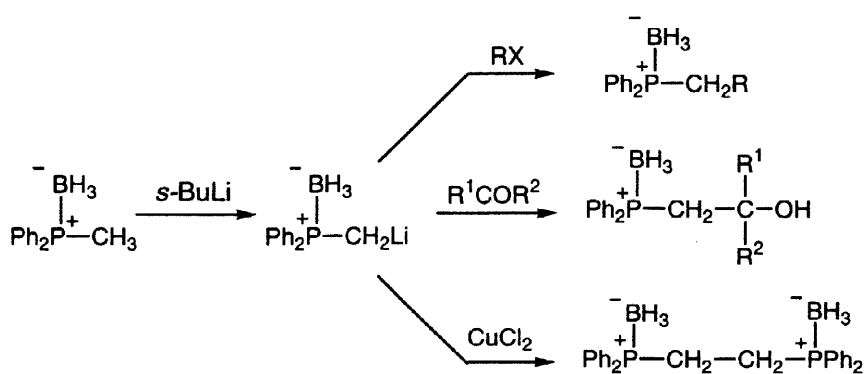


Scheme 57



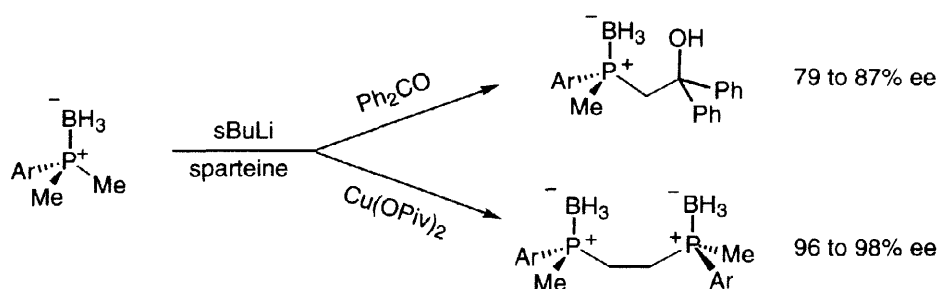
Scheme 58

As with the P-H bond, borane complexation activates the adjacent methyl group to deprotonation. The resulting carbanions reacted with alkyl halides and carbonyl compounds and underwent copper-promoted oxidative coupling to give diphosphines (Scheme 59).^{170,174} Borane adducts of (3-anisyl)- and (3-fluorophenyl)diphenylphosphine can be readily deprotonated at the heteroadjacent *para* position.¹⁷⁵



Scheme 59

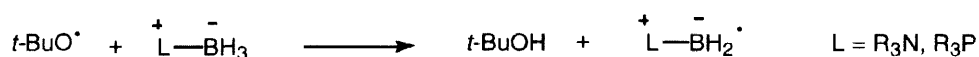
Enantioselective deprotonation has been achieved in the presence of sparteine as a route to C_2 -symmetric P -chiral diphosphines (Scheme 60).¹⁷⁶



Scheme 60

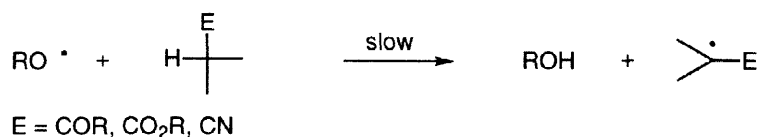
4.5. Amine- and phosphine-borane complexes in radical reactions.

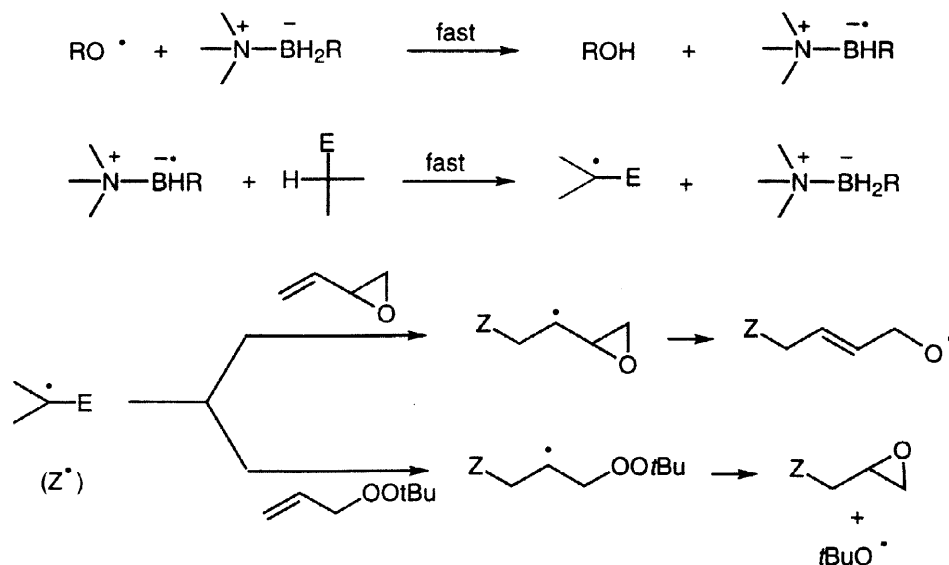
Amine- and phosphine-borane complexes have also found valuable applications in radical chemistry. Roberts's group has extensively studied the generation and the reactivity of amine- and phosphine-boryl radicals, mainly by ESR spectroscopy (Scheme 61).¹⁷⁷



Scheme 61

They rapidly abstract halogen from simple alkyl bromides.¹⁷⁸ Addition to fullerene C_{60} was also recently reported.¹⁷⁹ Amine-borane complexes can function as polarity-reversal catalysts in hydrogen-atom abstraction reactions. The single-step abstraction by *t*-butoxyl radical is replaced by a two-step catalytic cycle. The electron-rich hydrogen atom is first abstracted from the amine-alkylborane to give a nucleophilic amine-boryl radical, which subsequently captures with high regioselectivity the hydrogen α to a carbonyl group.¹⁸⁰ α -Alkoxy-carbonylalkyl radicals formed in this reaction add to vinylic epoxides and to allylic *tert*-butyl peroxides (Scheme 62).¹⁸¹ The adduct radicals evolve into allyloxyl and *tert*-butoxyl radicals leading to chain reactions for the synthesis of allylic alcohols and 2,3-epoxypropanated products.





Optically active amine-borane complexes have been used for kinetic resolution of racemic carbonyl-containing compounds under conditions of polarity-reversal catalysis.¹⁸² It is also worth noting that primary aminyl-borane are able to transfer a β -hydrogen atom to simple alkenes to form alkyl radicals.¹⁸³ Phosphine-boranes have been found to be good selective reagents for the deoxygenation of alcohol xanthate's.¹⁸⁴

5. MISCELLANEOUS APPLICATIONS

5.1. Boron analogues of biomolecules

Boron analogues of biologically important molecules constitute an exciting class of organoboranes because of their potential medicinal value.¹⁸⁵ Of particular interest have been amine-carboxyboranes, which are isoelectronic and isostructural with their naturally occurring carbon counterparts (Figure 6).¹⁸⁶



Figure 6. Amino acid derivatives and their boron analogues.

The replacement of a carbon by a boron atom has a profound effect on the pK_a . For example, H_3NBH_2COOH has a carboxyl group pK_a of 8.3 compared to 2.4 for glycine.

Similarly, the pK_a for the ammonium deprotonation is >11 while, for glycine, it is 9.7.¹⁸⁷ Thus, while the compounds are similar in size and geometry, they have very different electronic and hydrogen bonding properties and, therefore, different biological responses. Indeed, a diverse array of aminoacid analogues, including precursors and derivatives (such as peptides), have been synthesized and have expressed a promising therapeutic potential, as antiproliferative, antiinflammatory, analgesic, and hypolipidemic agents.^{188,189}

Another class of boron analogues of biomolecules are nucleosides and nucleic acid derivatives. Hydrolytically stable nucleosides cyanoboranes were prepared by an exchange reaction of silylated nucleosides with triphenylphosphine-cyanoborane (Figure 7).¹⁹⁰ 2'-Deoxycytidine-N³-cyanoborane was shown to possess antineoplastic activity in murine and human cell cultures.¹⁹¹

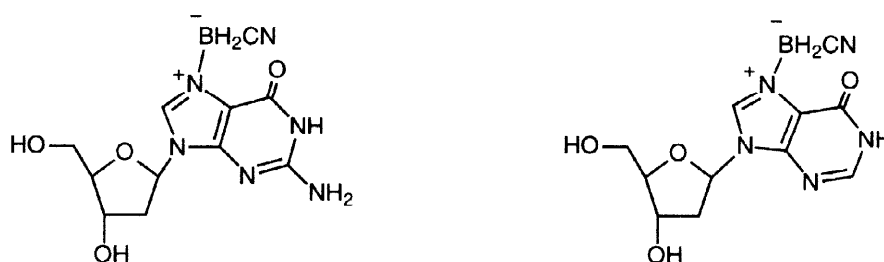
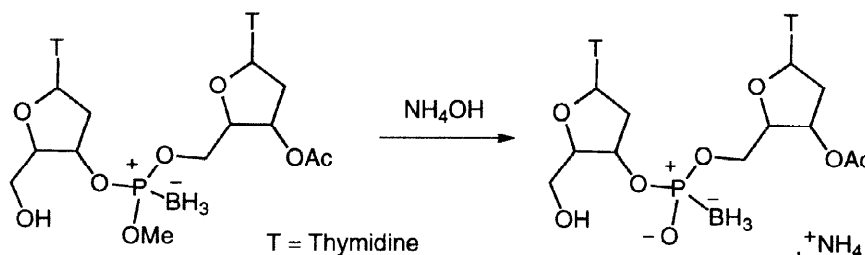


Figure 7. Nucleosides cyanoboranes

The “boronophosphates” oligonucleotides were prepared by treatment of a phosphiteborane with base (Scheme 63).¹⁹² The internucleotide boronophosphate group is remarkably stable to basic and acidic hydrolysis and also quite stable to nucleases. This is of considerable importance for a possible use in antisense therapy and in boron neutron capture therapy (BNCT).¹⁹³



Scheme 63

Related to these species are nucleoside triphosphates that are substrates for DNA polymerases and can be enzymatically incorporated into DNA during the polymerase chain reaction (Figure 8).¹⁹⁴

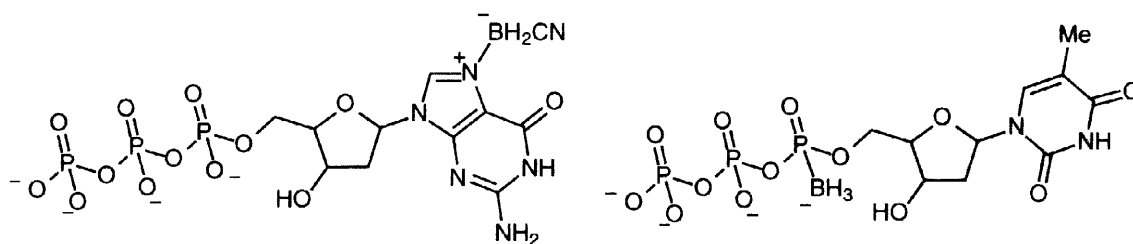
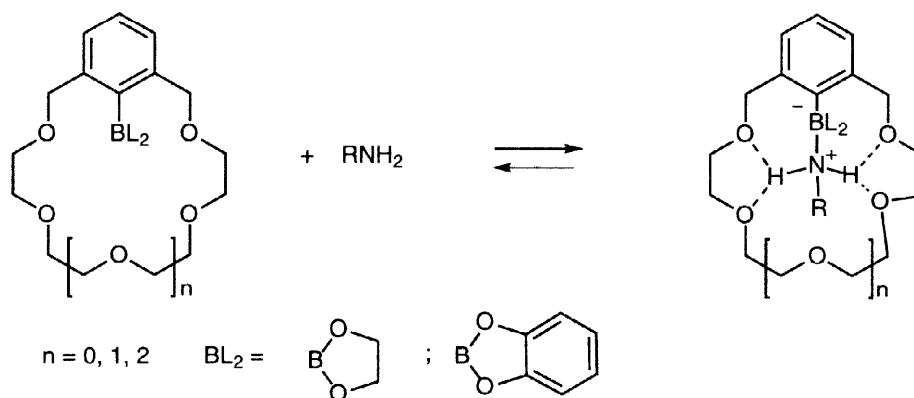


Figure 8. Boronated nucleoside triphosphates

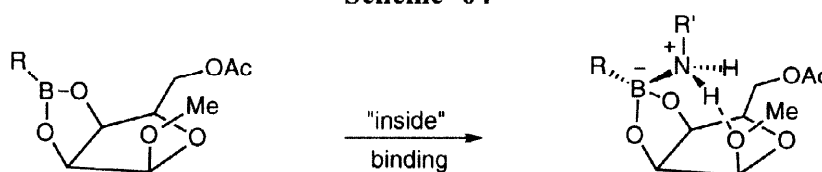
In a different area, it is also worth noting the design and the synthesis of saccharide-photoinduced electron transfer sensors based on the intramolecular interaction of a boronic acid unit and a tertiary amine.¹⁹⁵

5.2. Molecular recognition with boron-containing host molecules

Host molecules containing a Lewis acid metal centre and donor sites selectively bind primary amines *via* three-point binding (Scheme 64). The presence of a reversible boron-nitrogen bond permit the simultaneous formation of hydrogen bonds with the donor positions situated spatially nearby.¹⁹⁶ Boronated lyxofuranosides serve also as heterotopic host molecules, multi-point binding occurring at the “inside” position due to synergistic effects (Scheme 65).¹⁹⁷

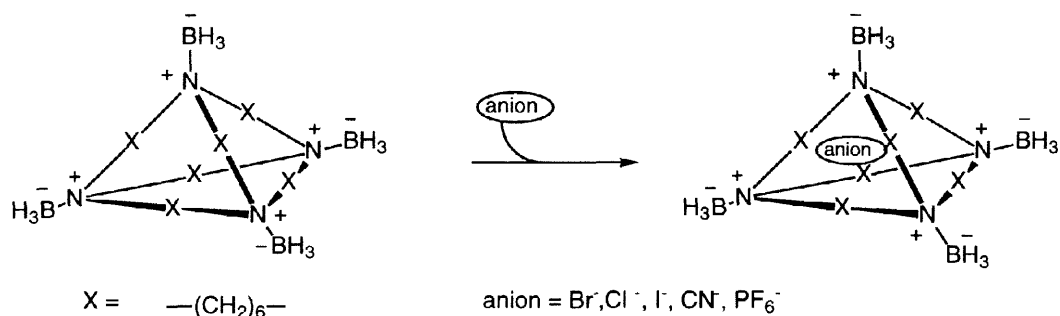


Scheme 64



Scheme 65

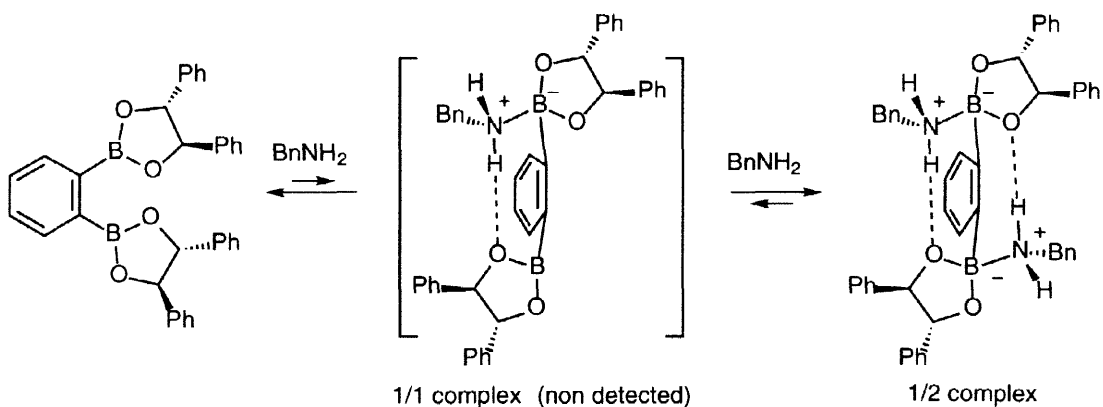
The addition of borane to a macrotricyclic tetramine produced a tetraadduct containing all four boron-nitrogen bonds in fixed orientation with their positive ends pointing towards the centre of the cavity (Scheme 66). The formation of host-guest inclusion complexes, which arose essentially from ion-dipole interactions, was confirmed ^1H NMR and by electrospray mass spectroscopy.¹⁹⁸



Scheme 66

A new type of neutral paraquat receptor was described the structure of which incorporated two dative B-N dipoles fixed in convergent orientations that are complementary with the two cationic centres of paraquat.¹⁹⁹

A chiral diboronic ester with two Lewis acid centers showed exceptionally strong binding with benzylamine. The formation of a 1/2 complex can be explained in terms of an allosteric effect. The first amine molecule coordinates with one of the two boron atoms. At the same time, one NH proton interacts with one of the two oxygen atoms in the other dioxaborolane ring to form a hydrogen bond. As a result, the two boronic esters are conformationally fixed to provide a preferable binding to the second amine molecule (Scheme 67).²⁰⁰



Scheme 67

Similarly, the Lewis acid, prepared from phenylboronic acid and (+)-tartaric acid, selects 1,6-diaminohexane over 1,2-diaminoethane by using two boron centres and two carbonyl oxygens (Figure 9). In the interaction with 1,2-diamino-1,2-diphenylethane, it chooses a different complexation pattern by recognizing the chirality of the amine.²⁰¹

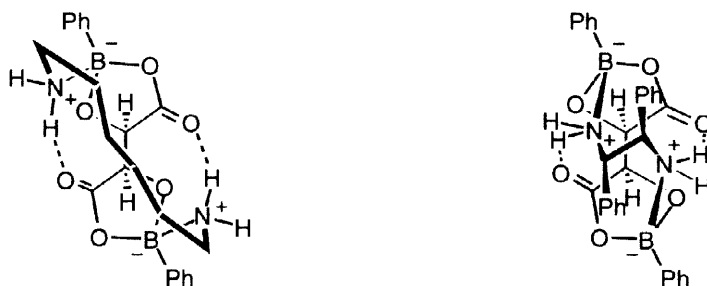
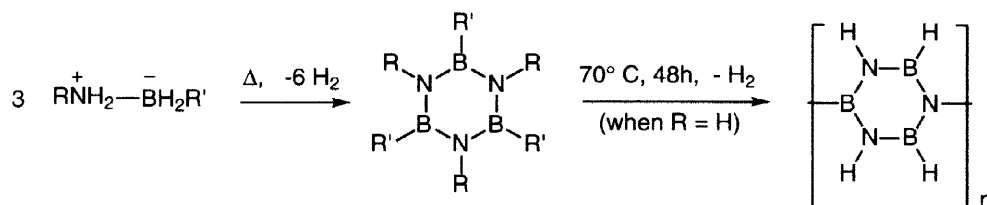


Figure 9. 1/1 Complexes of diamines and a chiral dioxaborolanone.

5.3. Borane complexes in material science

Thermolysis of amine-borane complexes produces borazines. The parent compound (R=H) readily dehydropolymerizes at moderate temperatures to afford polyborazylene ($B_3N_3H_4$)_n, which is a good precursor of boron nitride (Scheme 68).²⁰² The pyrolysis of pyridine-borane adducts in argon yields borocarbonitrides with graphite like, turbostatic structure.^{203,204}

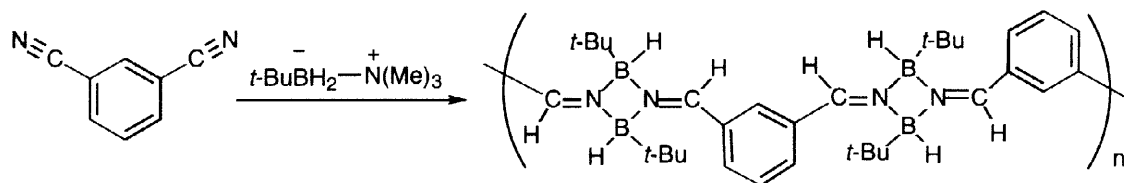


Scheme 68

Pre-ceramic precursors containing Al-N-B linkages were produced from the reactions of Me_3NAlH_3 with NH_3BH_3 in 1:1 and 1:2 ratios in toluene solutions followed by treatment with liquid ammonia. Both precursors were transformed into intimate ceramic mixtures of AlN and BN *via* pyrolysis under NH_3 at 1000°C .²⁰⁵ The synthesis of a boron-substituted polyaromatic mesophase was studied by copyrolysis of a filtered coal tar pitch with pyridine-borane under an argon atmosphere. These mesophases are potential precursors for the

production of boron-substituted sintered carbons.²⁰⁶ Modification of SiC precursors with an amine-borane complex was recently reported.²⁰⁷

Hydroboration polymerisation of dicyano compounds with *t*-butylborane-trimethylamine complex produced boron-containing polymers. This reaction includes the dimerization of iminoborane to form the cycloborazane unit as the key step (Scheme 69).²⁰⁸ Borane-amine complexes were also reported to be effective reagents with regard for cross-linking of elastomers.²⁰⁹



Scheme 69

A series of neutral pyridyl adducts involving strong Lewis acids BF_3 and $\text{C}_6\text{H}_6)_3$ has been prepared and their second order nonlinear optical coefficients have been examined.²¹⁰

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Amine- and phosphine-borane complexes have stimulated research interest from chemists for nearly a century. However, it is only in the last three decades that a better understanding of their basic reactions has led to a wide range of new synthetic applications. Oxazaborolidines have proven to be very efficient catalysts in the enantioselective reduction of prochiral ketones and significant advances have been made in the preparation of chiral non-racemic phosphines by using borane both as a protecting and an activating group. Promising results were also reported in various areas, such as boron analogues of aminoacids and nucleotides, boron-containing host molecules and in materials sciences. The chemistry of amine- and phosphine-borane complexes will certainly find many other opportunities for further expansion into stereocontrolled transformations and other useful applications.

ADDENDUM

Several new results have been described in the literature since the original manuscript was submitted. We have not modified the initial text and the representative examples previously

chosen to illustrate the chemistry of amine- and phosphine-boranes. References from the end of 1997 to the middle of 1998 have been simply added and collated under the different topics.

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Biographical sketch



Bertrand Carboni



Laurence Monnier

Bertrand Carboni was born in Rennes, France, in 1954. He received his degree from “Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Chimie de Paris” in 1977 and obtained his “Thèse de Docteur-Ingénieur” in 1980 working under the supervision of Pr Robert Carrié. From 1981, he was a research scientist at Rhône-Poulenc in Vitry sur Seine working on the synthesis of new fungicides and herbicides. After three years, he returned to the University of Rennes and entered the CNRS. He earned a Ph.D. under the direction of Professor Robert Carrié and Dr Michel Vaultier in 1986 on the chemistry of azides. From 1989 to 1990, he conducted postdoctoral studies in Professor Bernd Giese’s group at Basel on stereoselective radical reactions. He was promoted to the position of “Directeur de Recherche” in 1996. His research interests concern the use of organoboranes in organic synthesis and biology, the design of new polyamine derivatives as antiproliferative agents and, more recently, solid-phase organic synthesis.

Laurence Monnier was born in Loudéac, France, in 1969. She obtained her Ph.D under the direction of Dr Bertrand Carboni in 1997 on the synthesis of boron analogues of biologically active compounds. Her research interests concern the preparation of new amine- and phosphine-borane complexes by insertion reactions of dichlorocarbene into boron-hydrogen bonds and the development of new routes to α -aminoboronic acid