Electronic Supplementary Information for

Dramatic micellar rate enhancement of the Cu$^{2+}$ catalyzed
vinologous Friedel-Crafts alkylation in water

Fiora Rosati, Jens Olerich and Gerard Roelfes
Stratingh Institute for Chemistry, University of Groningen, Nijenborgh 4, 9747 AG, Groningen, The Netherlands

General remarks
All the substrates were synthesized following published procedures; 5-methoxyindole, SDS and Cu(NO$_3$)$_2$ were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich and used without further purification.

Representative procedure for catalytic Friedel-Crafts reactions: An aliquot of a stock solution of Cu(NO$_3$)$_2$ (0.15 mM final concentration) was added to a buffered solution (MOPS 20 mM, pH = 6) of SDS (8 mM final concentration) in a final volume of 250 mL. To this solution 2-acyl imidazole 1a, b, d (0.30 mmol) and 5-methoxyindole (1.5 mmol) both dissolved in a minimal amount of DMSO were added consecutively. The reaction was performed at room temperature and was stopped after 30 min by addition of diethyl ether. The organic layer was separated and dried over Na$_2$SO$_4$ and concentrated in vacuo. The product was purified by column chromatography (SiO$_2$ AcOEt: Pentane 1/1).

Kinetic measurements. All kinetic measurements were performed using UV-visible spectroscopy (JASCO V-560 or JASCO V-570 spectrophotometers) monitoring the decrease of the absorption of the dienophile at 25 °C. The decrease of the absorption at 326 (1c-e) and at 440 nm (1a-b) was followed in time until the reaction was complete. Pseudo-first-order rate constants were obtained using Grafit 3.0 (Erithacus software Ltd., 1992) to the exponential equation $A_t=A_\infty+A_0 \cdot e^{-k_t \cdot t}$, giving the observed rate constants ($k_{obs}$) directly. The ($k_{obs}$) was plotted against the concentration of 5-methoxyindole, and the $k_{app}$ was subsequently determined from the slope of this graph.

Cmc measurement: The measurements were performed under reaction conditions (MOPS buffer, 20 mM, pH = 6 and Cu(NO$_3$)$_2$ 0.15 mM) using Lauda Drop-volume tensiometer device.

Fig. S1 Cmc determination of SDS in presence of 0.15 mM Cu(NO$_3$)$_2$
UV spectra: The UV-Vis spectra were measured on a JASCO V-660 at 25°C

Fig. S2 UV spectra of the substrate 1a / Cu(NO₃)₂ in absence and in presence of 8 mM SDS

![UV spectra graph]

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[Cu^{2+}] = 0.15 \text{ mM}; [1\text{a}] = 0.015 \text{ mM}
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Characterization of products from preparative scale reactions.

\( ^1\text{H-NMR-spectra} \)

\text{3-(5-methoxy-1H-indol-3-yl)-3-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(1-methyl-1H-imidazol-2-yl)propan-1-one (2a)}

\(\delta \) (400 MHz, CDCl₃) 8.20 (br s, 1H), 7.15 (m, 1H), 7.05 (d, \( J = 2.2 \) Hz, 2H), 6.98 (d, \( J = 2.4 \) Hz, 1H), 6.92 (s, 1H), 6.79 - 6.74 (m, 3H), 4.93 (t, \( J = 7.6 \) Hz, 1H), 3.98 - 3.92 (dd, \( J = 16.3, J = 7.1 \) Hz, 1H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 3.84 - 3.78 (dd, \( J = 16.3, J = 8.2 \) Hz, 1H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 3.73 (s, 3H).
3-(5-methoxy-1H-indol-3-yl)-1-(1-methyl-1H-imidazol-2-yl)-3-phenylpropan-1-one (2b)

δ\textsubscript{H} (400 MHz, CDCl\textsubscript{3}) 8.20 (br s, 1H), 7.36 (d, J = 8.4, 2H), 7.21-7.18 (m, 2H), 7.18-7.11 (m, 2H), 7.07 (d, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 6.98 (m, 1H), 6.91(d, J = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.77 (dd, J = 8.8 Hz, J = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 4.98 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.03-3.96 (dd, J = 16.4 Hz, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 3.86-3.80 (dd, J = 16.4 Hz, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 3.75 (s, 3H).

3-(5-methoxy-1H-indol-3-yl)-4-methyl-1-(1-methyl-1H-imidazol-2-yl)pentan-1-one (2d)

δ\textsubscript{H} (400 MHz, CDCl\textsubscript{3}) 7.87 (br s, 1H), 7.16 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.12 (m, 1H), 7.04 -7.01 (dd, J = 6.1 Hz, J = 2.4 Hz, 2H), 6.93 (s, 1H), 6.80- 6.78 (dd, J = 8.8 Hz, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 3.84 (s, 3H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.68- 3.56 (m, 2H), 3.45- 3.40 (m, 1H), 2.11- 2.04 (m, 1H), 0.95 (d, J = 4.2 Hz, 3H), 0.93 (d, J = 4.2 Hz, 3H).