Electronic Supplementary Information

Direct Catalytic Asymmetric Aldol Reaction of β-Keto Esters with Formaldehyde Promoted by a Dinuclear Ni₂-Schiff Base Complex

Shinsuke Mouri, Zhihua Chen, Shigeki Matsunaga* and Masakatsu Shibasaki*

Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, The University of Tokyo, Hongo 7-3-1, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan, phone: +81-3-5841-4830, fax: +81-3-5684-5206, E-mail: mshibasa@mol.f.u-tokyo.ac.jp; smatsuna@mol.f.u-tokyo.ac.jp

Experimental Section

General:

Infrared (IR) spectra were recorded on a JASCO FT/IR 410 Fourier transform infrared spectrophotometer. NMR spectra were recorded on JEOL JNM-LA500, ECX500, or ECA500 spectrometers, operating at 500 MHz for ¹H NMR and 125.65 MHz for ¹³C NMR. Chemical shifts in CDCl₃ were reported in the scale relative to tetramethylsilane (0 ppm) for ¹H NMR. For ¹³C NMR, chemical shifts were reported in the scale relative to CHCl₃ (77.0 ppm) as an internal reference. Column chromatography was performed with silica gel Merck 60 (230-400 mesh ASTM). Optical rotations were measured on a JASCO P-1010 polarimeter. ESI mass spectra were measured on Waters micromass ZQ (for LRMS) and FAB mass spectra (for HRMS) were measured on a JEOL JMS-700 spectrometer. The enantiomeric excess (ee) was determined by HPLC analysis. HPLC was performed on JASCO HPLC systems consisting of the following: pump, PU-2080 plus; detector, UV-2075 plus, measured at 280 nm; column, DAICEL CHIRALPAK AS-H or AD-H; mobile phase, hexane-2-propanol. Diisopropylether (iPr_2O) was distilled from sodium benzophenone ketyl. Other reagents were purified by the usual methods. Formaldehyde solution (37% w/w in H₂O) and paraformaldehyde were purchased from Aldich. β-Keto esters^[S1, S2] were prepared by following the same procedures as described in literatures.

References

[S1] C. Palomo, M. Oiarbide, J. M. García, P. Bañuelos, J. M. Odriozola, J. Razkin, A. Linden, *Org. Lett.* **2008**, *10*, 2637.

[S2] T. B. Poulsen, L. Bernardi, M. Bell, K. A. Jørgensen, Angew. Chem., Int. Ed. 2006, 45, 6551.

Preparation of Ni₂-Schiff Base 1 Complex:

To a solution of (R,R)-Schiff base ligand **1** (400 mg, 0.76 mmol) in EtOH (7.6 mL), was added Ni(OAc)₂•4H₂O (378 mg, 1.52 mmol), and the mixture was stirred for 12 h under reflux. After cooling down to room temperature, H₂O (1.0 mL) was added to the mixture. The precipitate (Ni₂/Schiff base **1** complex) was collected by filtration. Then, the solid was washed with hexane and EtOH. The solid was dried under reduced pressure at 50 °C to afford the Ni₂-Schiff base **1** complex (417 mg) as a dark yellow solid. The complex was used for the asymmetric reaction without further purification, and was stored under Ar at room temperature. Catalytic activity did not change for 5 months.

General Procedure for Catalytic Asymmetric Hydroxymethylation of β -Keto Esters Using a Ni₂-Schiff Base 1 Catalyst:

To a stirred solution of the Ni₂/Schiff base **1** catalyst (0.096 mg, 0.15 μ mol) in *i*Pr₂O (7.5 mL) was added β -keto ester **2a** (26.2 mg, 0.15 mmol). To the mixture at 40 °C was added 37% aqueous formaldehyde solution (21.7 mg, 0.165 mmol), and the resulting suspension was stirred for 1 h. The mixture was diluted with diethyl ether, and the precipitate was removed by filtration through a pad of Celite. After the filtrate was concentrated under reduced pressure, the residue was purified by silica gel flash column chromatography (hexane/ethyl acetate = 3/1) to give the desired product **3a** (30.2 mg, 94% yield) as a colorless oil.

(S)-tert-butyl 1-(hydroxymethyl)-2-oxocyclopentanecarboxylate (3a)

colorless oil; IR (neat) v 3460, 2973, 1748, 1721 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.45 (s, 9H), 1.93-2.11 (m, 2H), 2.14-2.20 (m, 1H), 2.25-2.36 (m, 2H), 2.42-2.50 (m, 1H), 2.74 (dd, J = 4.6, 9.0, 1H), 3.75 (dd, J = 9.0, 12.0, 1H), 3.85 (dd, J = 4.6, 12.0, 1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 19.7, 27.9, 31.3, 38.4, 62.2, 63.8, 82.6, 170.8, 215.4; LRMS(ESI): m/z 237 [M+Na]⁺; HRMS (FAB): m/z calculated for C₁₁H₁₈O₄Cs⁺ [M+Cs]⁺: 347.0260, found: 347.0272, [α]_D^{16.0} +6.3 (*c* 1.00, CHCl₃); HPLC (DAICEL CHIRALPAK AS-H, hexane/2-propanol = 95/5, flow 0.5 mL/min, detection at 280 nm) t_R 20.4 min (major) and 25.2 min (minor).

(S)-tert-butyl 1-(hydroxymethyl)-2-oxocyclohexanecarboxylate (3b)

colorless oil; IR (neat) v 3463, 2978, 1709 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.49 (s, 9H), 1.49-1.63 (m, 3H), 1.78-1.82 (m, 1H), 2.02-2.08 (m, 1H), 2.27-2.32 (m, 1H), 2.41-2.47 (m, 1H), 2.60-2.68 (m, 1H), 2.85 (dd, J = 5.3, 9.7 Hz, 1H), 3.68 (dd, J = 9.7, 11.5 Hz, 1H), 3.78 (dd, J = 5.3, 11.5 Hz,

1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 22.0, 26.9, 27.9, 32.9, 41.0, 63.1, 66.7, 82.7, 170.3, 211.3; LRMS(ESI): m/z 251 [M+Na]⁺; HRMS (FAB): m/z calculated for C₁₂H₂₀O₄Cs⁺ [M+Cs]⁺: 361.0416, found: 361.0406; $[\alpha]_D^{19.0}$ +5.2 (*c* 1.04, CHCl₃), HPLC (DAICEL CHIRALPAK AS-H, hexane/2-propanol = 95/5, flow 0.5 mL/min, detection at 280 nm) t_R 14.3 min (major) and 17.2 min (minor).

(S)-tert-butyl 1-(hydroxymethyl)-2-oxocycloheptanecarboxylate (3c)

colorless oil; IR (neat) v3535, 2976, 2932, 2862, 1701 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.48 (s, 9H), 1.58-1.64 (m, 4H), 1.74-1.84 (m, 3H), 1.91-1.96 (m, 1H), 2.49- 2.54 (m, 1H), 2.71-2.76 (m, 1H), 3.04 (dd, J =

4.9, 9.7 Hz ,1H), 3.68 (dd, J = 9.7, 11.4 Hz, 1H), 3.94 (dd, J = 4.9, 11.4 Hz 1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 25.2, 25.6, 27.9, 30.1, 30.9, 43.0, 64.4, 67.3, 82.6, 171.3, 212.6; ESI-MS m/z 265 [M+Na]⁺; HRMS calcd. for C₁₃H₂₂O₄Cs [M+Cs]⁺:375.0573, found 375.0561; $[\alpha]_D^{18.0}$ +4.6 (c 1.23, CHCl₃); HPLC (DAICEL CHIRALPAK AD-H, hexane/2-propanol = 90/10, flow 0.5 mL/min, detection at 280 nm) t_R 13.1 min (major) and 16.1 min (minor).

CO₂^tBu

(S)-tert-butyl 2-(hydroxymethyl)-2-methyl-3-oxobutanoate (3d)

colorless oil; IR (neat) v 3419, 2979, 1735, 1715 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.35 (s, 3H), 1.48 (s, 9H), 2.23 (s, 3H), 2.73 (dd, J = 6.9, 8.0Hz), 3.76 (dd, J = 8.0, 11.5 Hz), 3.85 (dd, J = 6.9, 11.5); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 17.2, 27.0, 27.9, 61.7, 66.6, 82.6, 171.5, 207.0; ESI-MS m/z 225 [M+Na]⁺; HRMS calcd. for C₁₀H₁₈O₄Cs [M+Cs]⁺: 335.0260, found335.0250; [α]_D^{19.0} +4.6 (c 1.03, CHCl₃); HPLC (DAICEL CHIRALPAK AD-H, hexane/2-propanol = 90/10, flow 0.5 mL/min, detection at 280 nm) t_R 13.2 min (major) and 15.1 min (minor).

(S)-*tert*-butyl 2-ethyl-2-(hydroxymethyl)-3-oxobutanoate (3e)

colorless oil; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 0.90 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 3H), 1.49 (s, 9H), 1.81-1.89 (m, 1H), 1.92-2.00 (m, 1H), 2.23 (s, 3H), 2.47 (dd, J = 6.0, 8.0 Hz, 1H), 3.85 (dd, J = 8.0, 12.0 Hz, 1H), 3.96 (dd, J = 6.0, Et

12.0 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 8.8, 24.3, 27.5, 27.9, 63.9, 65.9, 82.5, 171.1, 206.8; ESI-MS *m*/*z* 239 [M+Na]⁺; HRMS calcd. for C₁₁H₂₀O₄Cs [M+Cs]⁺: 349.0416, found 349.0408; $[\alpha]_D^{26.0}$ +5.3 (*c* 1.11, CHCl₃); HPLC (DAICEL CHIRALPAK AS-H, hexane/2-propanol = 90/10, flow 0.5 mL/min, detection at 280 nm) t_R 12.3 min (major) and 13.1 min (minor).

(S)-tert-butyl 2-benzyl-2-(hydroxymethyl)-3-oxobutanoate (3f)

colorless oil; IR (neat) v 3463, 2978, 2938, 1709 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.46 (s, 9H), 2.24 (dd, J = 5.5, 7.5, 1H), 2.27 (s, 3H), 3.18 (d, J = 14.0 Hz, 1H), 3.25 (d, J = 14.0, 1H), 3.79 (dd, J = 7.5,12.0 Hz, 1H), 3.93 (dd, J = 5.5, 12.0 Hz, 1H), 7.18-7.29 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃)

12.0 Hz, 1H), 3.93 (dd, J = 5.5, 12.0 Hz, 1H), 7.18-7.29 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 27.87, 27.92, 36.5, 63.7, 66.7, 82.9, 127.0, 128.3, 130.1, 135.9, 170.2, 205.6; ESI-MS m/z 301 [M+Na]⁺; HRMS calcd. for C₁₆H₂₂O₄Cs [M+Cs]⁺: 411.0573, found 411.0580; [α]_D^{26.0} +2.6 (*c* 1.23, CHCl₃); HPLC (DAICEL CHIRALPAK AD-H, hexane/2-propanol = 9/1, flow 0.5 mL/min, detection at 254 nm) t_R 15.0 min (major) and 18.6 min (minor).

(S)-tert-butyl 2-benzyl-2-(hydroxymethyl)-3-oxo-3-phenylpropanoate (3g)

colorless solid; mp 66-70 °C; IR (neat) v 3487, 2976, 2932, 1718, 1679 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.32 (s, 9H), 1.58 (s, 3H), 2.79 (dd, J = 6.9, 6.9, 1H), 3.93 (d, J = 6.9, 11.5 Hz, 1H), 4.01 (dd, J = 6.9, 11.5 Hz, 1H), 4.01 (

Hz, 1H), 7.42-7.46 (m, 2H), 7.53-7.57 (m, 1H), 7.86-7.89 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃) δ 18.6, 27.6, 59.6, 68.0, 82.6, 128.4, 128.8, 133.0, 135.4, 171.8, 199.3; ESI-MS *m/z* 287 [M+Na]⁺; HRMS calcd. for C₁₅H₂₀O₄Cs [M+Cs]⁺: 397.0416, found 397.0414; [α]_D^{13.0} +2.6 (*c* 1.00, CHCl₃); HPLC (DAICEL CHIRALPAK AD-H, hexane/2-propanol = 9/1, flow 0.5 mL/min, detection at 254 nm) t_R 13.9 min (major) and 15.3 min (minor).











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