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Enantioselective Synthesis of Boron-Substituted Quaternary Carbon Stereogenic Centers through NHC–Catalyzed Conjugate Additions of (Pinacolato)boron Units to Enones**

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Abstract

The first examples of Lewis base-catalyzed enantioselective boryl conjugate additions (BCA) that generate boron-substituted quaternary carbon stereogenic centers are disclosed. Reactions are performed in the presence of 1.0–5.0 mol % of a readily available chiral accessible N-heterocyclic carbene (NHC) and commercially available bis(pinacolato)diboron; cyclic or linear α,β-unsaturated ketones can be used and rigorous exclusion of air or moisture is not necessary. The desired products are obtained in 63–95% yield and 91:9 to >99:1 enantiomeric ratio (e.r.). The special utility of the NHC-catalyzed approach is demonstrated in the context of an enantioselective synthesis of natural product anti-fungal (−)-crassinervic acid.

Keywords

boron; conjugate additions; enantioselective synthesis; N-heterocyclic carbenes; organic synthesis; quaternary carbons

Reliable, efficient, and selective catalytic methods for synthesis of organoboron compounds are of considerable importance.[1] A challenge in organoboron chemistry is the development of catalytic protocols that furnish C–B bonds enantioselectively. There are enantioselective protocols for boron-hydride,[2] diboron,[3] proto-boryl,[4] and conjugate additions[5] to unsaturated compounds as well as allylic substitutions[6] that form B-substituted stereogenic centers and are promoted by transition metal-containing catalysts; related boryl additions to imines have been introduced as well.[7] In the case of boron conjugate addition (BCA) reactions, chiral Lewis base catalysts provide effective alternatives to the Cu-based complexes (Scheme 1);[8] chiral N-heterocyclic carbenes (NHCs) promote enantioselective BCA,[9] offer distinctive chemoselectivity profiles that are otherwise unavailable (Scheme 1).[8d] The large majority of the above protocols, however, relate to the formation of tertiary C–B bonds, and the small number of disclosures focused on the difficult enantioselective

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Dedicated to the memory of Professor Harry H. Wasserman

BCA processes that generate boron-substituted quaternary carbon centers[10,11] have remained in the domain of Cu catalysis.[12] The lone report involving allylic substitutions furnishing allyl–B(pin) products involves the use of an enantiomerically pure Cu-containing complex.[6b] To the best of our knowledge, there are no examples of Lewis base-catalyzed enantioselective reactions that furnish quaternary B-substituted carbons; such transformations would constitute a notable addition to the collection of catalytic enantioselective C–B bond forming processes.

Herein, we disclose the first instances of Lewis base-catalyzed enantioselective BCA transformations that deliver cyclic or acyclic products with a boron-substituted quaternary carbon; products are obtained in 63–95% yield and 91:9 to >99:1 enantiomeric ratio (e.r.). The catalytic method's unique features are highlighted by an enantioselective synthesis of natural product crassinervic acid.

We first probed a number of easily accessible chiral NHCs that might be used to catalyze the formation of **4a** efficiently and enantioselectively (Table 1). C_2-Symmetric carbenes derived from **1a**–**b** promote the BCA in moderate yield and e.r. (entries 1–2, Table 1). There is complete substrate consumption in 14 h when C_1-symmetric **2a**[13] is used; **4a** is obtained in 88:12 e.r. (entry 3). Reaction with the *m*-*i*Pr-substituted derivative **2b** is less efficient and selective (68% conv., 67:33 e.r.; entry 4). When the NAr moieties of the NHC catalysts are dissymmetric (i.e., **3a**–**c** in entries 5–7), BCA is efficient (>90% conv.) and highly enantioselective (>90:10 e.r.). Transformation with **3c** furnishes **4a** in 90% yield and 96:4 e.r. Additional noteworthy points are:

1. When the reaction is carried out with 1.0 mol % **3c** and 5.0 mol % dbu, under otherwise identical conditions, there is 87% conversion to **4a** (84% yield, 95:5 e.r.).
2. Rigorous exclusion of air and moisture is not required with the NHC-catalyzed transformations; **4a** can be isolated in 92% yield and 95:5 e.r. when the reaction is performed in a typical fume hood.[14
3. Preparation of **3c** is more efficient[14] than the catalyst precursor identified previously as optimal for BCA of the disubstituted cyclic enones.[8d]
4. Generally, NHC-catalyzed BCA processes that furnish B-substituted quaternary carbon stereogenic centers are more enantioselective than those involving disubstituted cyclic enones (e.g., β-B(pin)-substituted cyclohexanone formed in 87:13 e.r. vs. 96:4 e.r. for **4a**).
5. When the transformation in entry 7 of Table 1 is carried out with 5.0 mol % CuCl, **4a** is obtained in only 67:33 e.r. (>98% conv., 89% yield), underscoring the disparate mechanistic attributes of the NHC-catalyzed pathways.

β-Substituted cyclohexenones, including those containing an alkyl (cf. **4b**–**e**) or different aryl groups (cf. **4f**–**j**), undergo NHC-catalyzed BCA to afford products in 63–95% yield and 93:7–97:3 e.r. (Scheme 2). Alkyl-substituted cyclic enones with a terminal alkyne (cf. **4d**) or an allene (cf. **4e**) are effective substrates. As the data for **4f**–**g** and **4j** indicate, 1.0 mol % **3c** and 5.0 mol % dbu may be used with similar effectiveness. Catalytic BCA to enones with a relatively bulky substituent is somewhat less enantioselective; for example, the

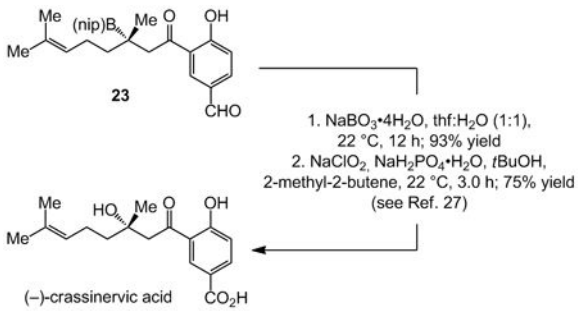
transformation of β-*i*Pr-cyclohexenone delivers the expected β-boryl-cyclohexanone in 71% yield (75% conv.) and 86:14 e.r. (at 4 °C). The X-ray structure of **4c** establishes the absolute stereochemistry of the BCA process.[15] When enantioselective synthesis of alkyne-containing **4d** was attempted under the Cu-catalyzed conditions introduced by Shibasaki (12 mol % (*R*,*R*)-QuinoxP*, 10 mol % $CuPF_6(MeCN)_4$, 15 mol % LiO*t*Bu, 1.5 equiv. $B_2(pin)_2$, dmso, 22 °C, 12 h), [12a] the product was isolated in 45% yield and 88:12 e.r.; with allene-bearing **4e**, a complex mixture of unidentified products was formed. Such discrepancies are likely rooted in competitive reaction of the Cu–B(pin) complex with alkyne[16] and allene moieties.[17]

β-Substituted cyclopentenones undergo reaction to furnish **5a**–**d** in 89–91% yield and 92:8–99:1 e.r. (Scheme 3). Additions to cycloheptenone (cf. **6**) and (for the first time) cyclooctenone (cf. **7**) afford the desired products in 77–78% yield and 95:5 e.r.

Transformations of acyclic aryl- or alkyl-substituted enones[18] deliver linear β-boryl ketones in 56–94% yield and up to >99:1 e.r. (Scheme 4). In some cases, simple recrystallization delivers materials of exceptional enantiomeric purity. Unlike cyclic enones, reactions proceed most enantioselectively with imidazolinium salt **2a**.[19] For example, when **3c** is used in the NHC-catalyzed BCA to enone **8b**, β-boryl ketone **9b** is isolated in 69% yield and 89:11 e.r. (vs. 90% yield and 91:9 e.r.). We have shown that BCA promoted by a chiral NHC–Cu complex leading to phenylketone **12a** proceeds with lower selectivity [12b] in spite of being performed at −78 °C (82.5:17.5 in 24 h vs. 97:3 e.r. with **2a** at 35 °C in 14 h).

A deficiency of the NHC–Cu-catalyzed BCA is its ineffectiveness with enoates. We have established that treatment of a β-boryl product with common household bleach for 12 hours at 70°C[20] converts the C–B bond to a tertiary alcohol and the methyl ketone to a carboxylic acid (Scheme 5). At room temperature, β-hydroxyl ketone **15** is obtained in 95% yield after two hours.[21]

The study of enantioselective synthesis of anti-fungal natural product (−)-crassinervic acid,[22] elucidates the advantages of present approach [Table 2 and Eq. (1)].[23] It should be noted that generally efficient and enantioselective aldol additions to ketones are yet to be developed.[24] Under NHC-catalyzed and two of the more effective conditions involving phosphine- and NHC–Cu complexes (conditions A–C, respectively), there is complete consumption of acetal-containing enone **17**, but it is the NHC-catalyzed BCA that delivers the highest e.r. (84:16 vs. 60:40 and 61:39). Subjection of **18**, containing a phenol and an aldehyde group, to the NHC-catalyzed BCA conditions affords **23** in 72% yield and 95:5 e.r. On the contrary, treatment with the chiral Cu complex derived from diamine **17**, effective for BCA to linear β,β-disubstituted ketones,[12c] affords the desired product in only 19% yield; with **21**[12b] as the catalyst source, <2% conversion is observed.[25] Finally, when **19**, containing a phenol and a carboxylic acid is used, only the NHC-catalyzed process is efficient. Oxidation of **23** with $NaBO_3$ affords the tertiary alcohol in 93% yield [Eq. (1)], which has been converted to the target molecule (75% yield).[26]



(1)

Investigations regarding the elucidation of mechanistic details of the NHC-catalyzed reactions are in progress and will be reported shortly.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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14. Whereas 3c is obtained in four steps and 23% overall yield, the *o*-[2,4,6-(*i*-Pr)$_3$]phenyl derivative is synthesized in ca. 5% overall yield.
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19. As with the cyclic substrates (Ref. 14), 2a is more easily prepared than the more sizeable derivative needed to obtain maximum enantioselectivity with disubstituted acyclic enones or enals.
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21. Analysis of the unpurified product mixture indicates that the lower yield at 70 °C is due to adventitious retro-aldol processes.
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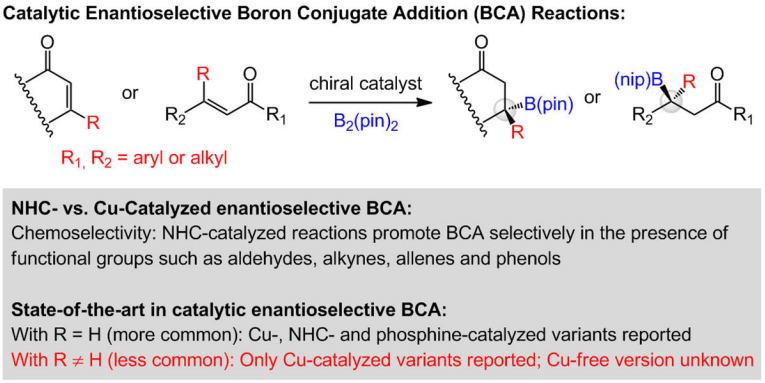
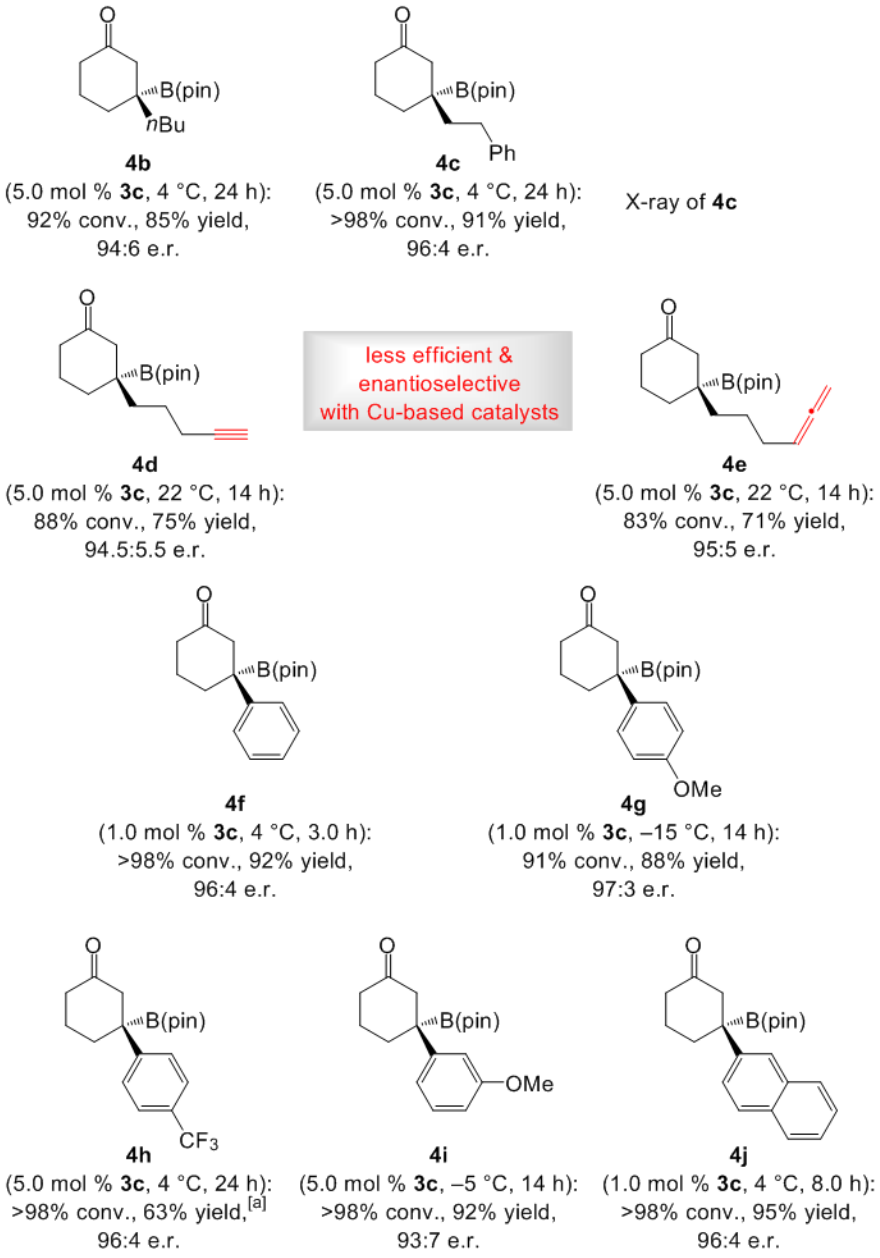


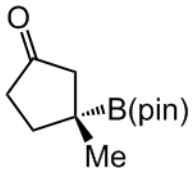
Scheme 1.

Comparison of Cu-catalyzed and Cu-free enantioselective boron conjugate addition (BCA). B(pin) = (pinacolato)boron.

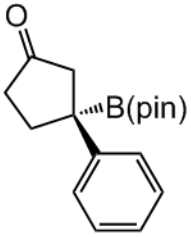


Scheme 2.

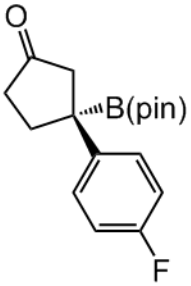
β-Boryl cyclohexenones can be accessed efficiently and enantioselectively. For general conditions see Table 1. [a] Proto-deboration byproduct formed (ca. 30%); 63% is the yield of pure **4h**.



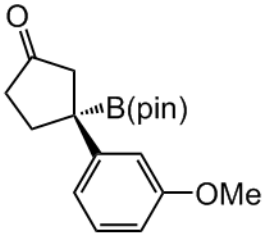
5a
(5.0 mol % **3c**, 22 °C, 14 h):
>98% conv., 90% yield,
99:1 e.r.



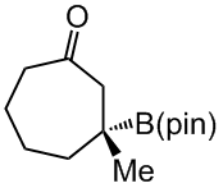
5b
(5.0 mol % **3c**, 4 °C, 14 h):
>98% conv., 89% yield,
93:7 e.r.



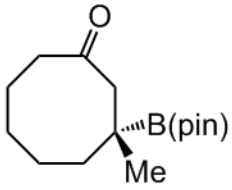
5c
(5.0 mol % **3c**, 22 °C, 14 h):
>98% conv., 91% yield,
92:8 e.r.



5d
(5.0 mol % **3c**, –5 °C, 14 h):
>98% conv., 91% yield,
95:5 e.r.

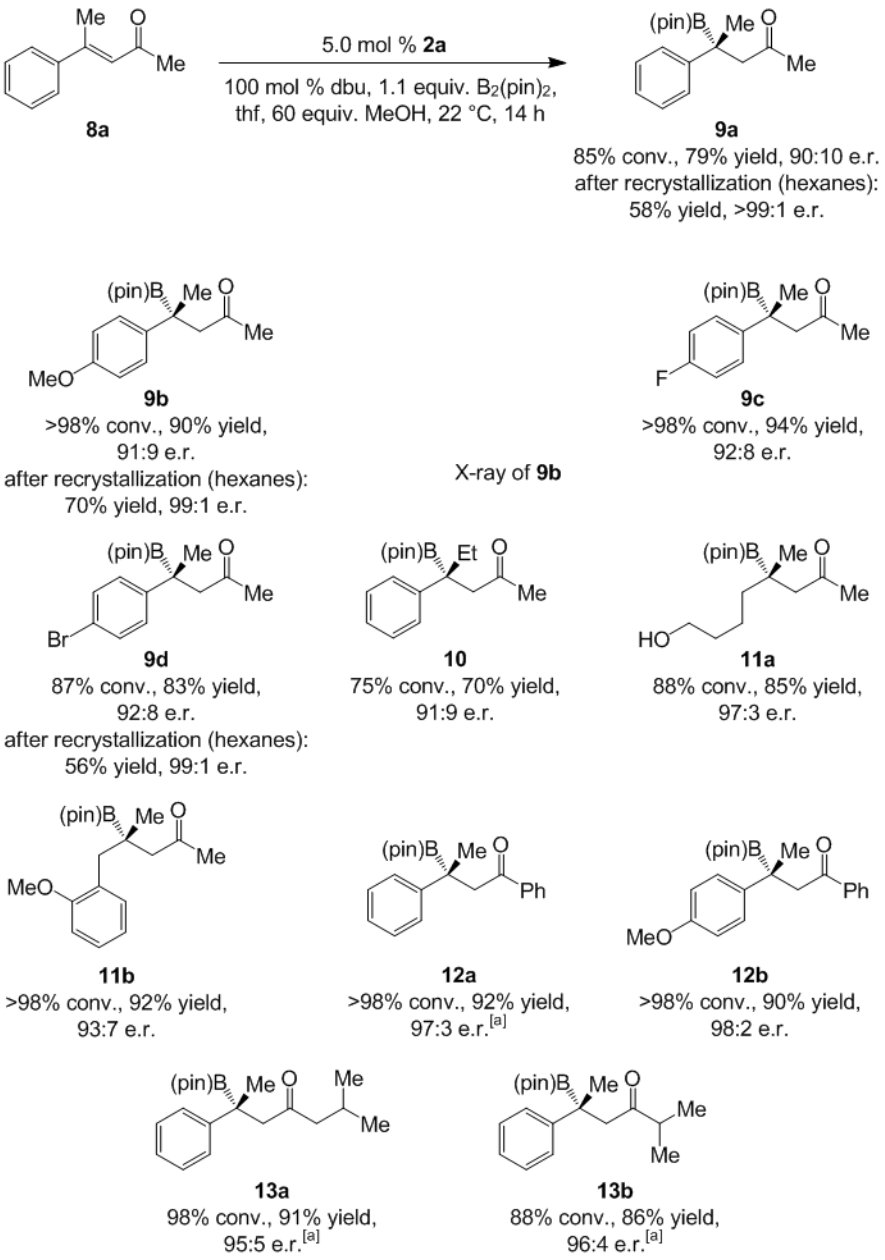


6
(5.0 mol % **3c**, –5 °C, 14 h):
82% conv., 77% yield,
95:5 e.r.



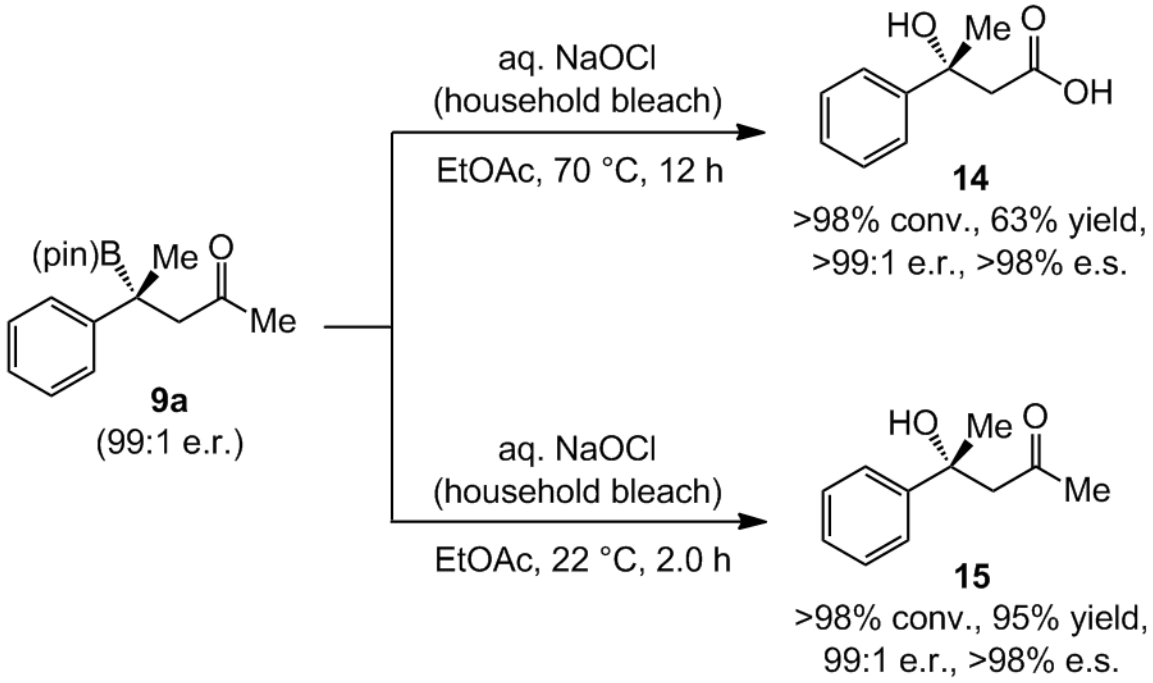
7
(1.0 mol % **3c**, 4 °C, 14 h):
85% conv., 78% yield,
95:5 e.r.

Scheme 3.
NHC-catalyzed BCA reactions can be performed with five- or seven- and eight-membered enones.



Scheme 4.

Efficient and highly enantioselective NHC-catalyzed BCA reactions of acyclic enones. [a] Performed at 35 °C.

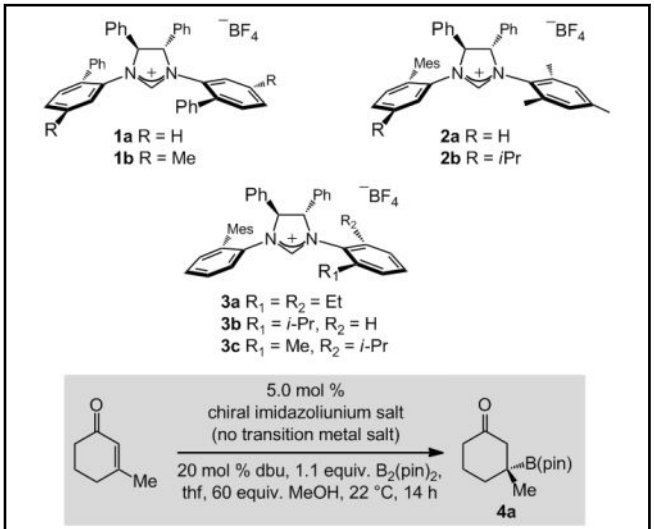


Scheme 5.

Subjection of an enantiomerically enriched BCA product to common bleach at room temperature affords the ketone aldol product or the derived β-hydroxy-acid (e.s. = product enantiomeric excess/substrate enantiomeric excess x 100).

Table 1

Examination of chiral imidazolinium salts as catalyst precursors.[a]



Entry	Imidazolinium Salt	Conv. [%][b]	Yield [%][c]	e.r.[d]
1	**1a**	**53**	**46**	**84:16**
2	**1b**	96	85	84:16
3	**2a**	>98	79	88:12
4	**2b**	68	54	67:33
5	**3a**	>98	74	91.5:8.5
6	**3b**	91	82	90:10
7	**3c**	>98	90	96:4

[a] Reactions were performed under N_2 atmosphere.

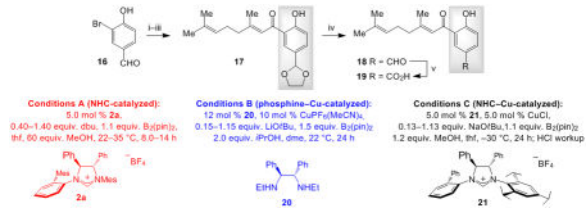
[b] Determined by analysis of 400 MHz ^{1}H NMR spectra of unpurified mixtures (±2%).

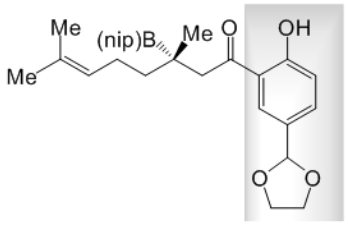
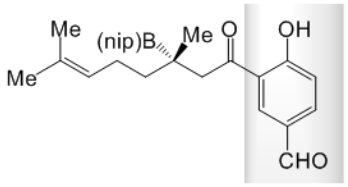
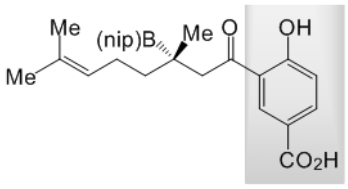
[c] Yields of isolated and purified products (±5%).

[d] Determined by GC analysis (±2%); see the Supporting Information for details. dbu = 1,8-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene; Mes = 2,4,6-$Me_3C_6H_2$.

Table 2

Comparison of different Approaches en Route to (−)-Crassinervicn Acid.[a]



Product	Conditions	Conv. [%][b]	Yield [%][c]	e.r.[d]
 **22**	**A;** 0.4 equiv. dbu, 22 °C, 14 h	>98	63	84:16
	B; 0.15 equiv. LiO*t*Bu, 22 °C, 24 h	87	78	60:40
	C; 0.13 equiv. NaO*t*Bu, −30 °C, 24 h	>98 (to **23**)	82 (of **23**)	69:31
 **23**	**A;** 0.4 equiv. dbu, 35 °C, 8.0 h	>98	72	95:5
	B; 0.15 equiv. LiO*t*Bu, 22 °C, 24 h	>98	19	nd
	C; 0.13 equiv. NaO*t*Bu, −30 °C, 24 h	>98	<2	na
 **24**	**A;** 1.4 equiv. dbu, 22 °C, 14 h	>98	70	88.5:11.5
	B; 1.15 equiv. LiO*t*Bu, 22 °C, 24 h	>98	<10	nd
	C; 1.13 equiv. NaO*t*Bu, −30 °C, 24 h	>98	22	nd

[a] Conditions: i) $HO(CH_2)_2OH$, 10 mol % *p*TsOH•H_2O, tol., reflux, 12 h; 90% yield. ii) 3.0 equiv. *t*BuLi, thf, −78 °C; geranial, −78 °C, 2.0 h. iii) 1.0 mol % $(n\text{-Pr})_4NRuO_4$, N-methylmorpholine N-oxide, CH_2Cl_2, 22 °C, 2.0 h. iv) 10 mol % *p*TsOH, acetone, 22 °C, 10 min.; 63% overall yield for three steps. v) $NaClO_2$, NaH_2PO_4•H_2O, *t*BuOH, H_2O, 2-methyl-2-butene, 22 °C, 3.0 h; 82% yield. Reactions were performed under N_2 atmosphere.

[b] Determined by analysis of 400 MHz ^1H NMR spectra of unpurified mixtures (±2%).

[c] Yields of isolated and purified products (±5%).

[d] Determined by GC analysis (±2%). See the Supporting Information for details.