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# Selective oxidation of alcohol-*d*<sub>1</sub> to aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> using MnO<sub>2</sub><sup>†</sup>

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The selective oxidation of alcohol-*d*<sub>1</sub> to prepare aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> was newly developed by means of NaBD<sub>4</sub> reduction/activated MnO<sub>2</sub> oxidation. Various aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> derivatives including aromatic and unsaturated aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> can be prepared with a high deuterium incorporation ratio (up to 98% D). Halogens (chloride, bromide, and iodide), alkene, alkyne, ester, nitro, and cyano groups in the substrates are tolerated under the mild conditions.

## 1. Introduction

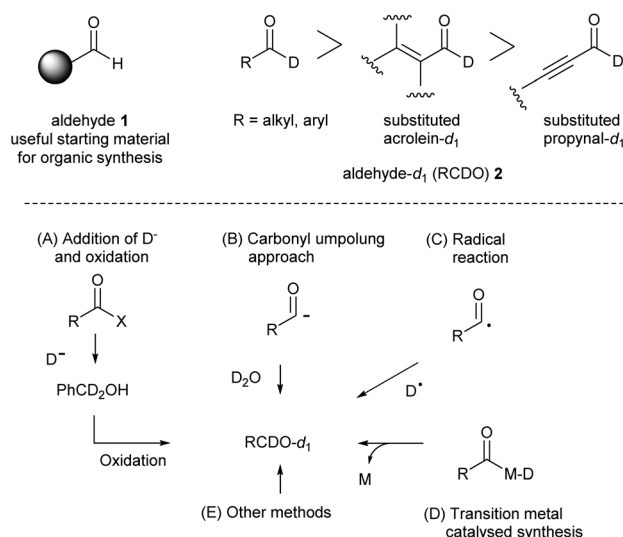
Deuterium (<sup>2</sup>H, *d*) is a stable, non-radioactive, and safe isotope of hydrogen (<sup>1</sup>H). Since its discovery,<sup>1</sup> *d* has been widely utilized in organic chemistry, biochemistry, analytical chemistry, pharmaceutical science, and drug discovery.<sup>2,3</sup> Because of the high demand for *d*-labelled molecules in the scientific research fields, many efforts have been devoted to developing a new method for the synthesis of *d*-labelled molecules.

Aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> **2** has received significant attention as a synthetic target due to the facts that aldehyde **1** is a useful feedstock in organic synthesis. Various methods have been performed in the synthesis of alkyl and aryl aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub>. For example, more than 40 syntheses (25 different reaction conditions) of benzaldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> (PhCDO) were conducted even since 2018 in the studies to develop new *d*-incorporation method or reaction mechanism using PhCDO.<sup>4–8</sup>

The previous synthetic approaches to access *d*-labelled molecules are classified into 5 types; (A) addition of D<sup>−</sup> followed by oxidation, (B) carbonyl Umpolung approach, (C) radical reaction, (D) transition metal-catalysed reaction, and (E) others. Recently, mild, one-step, and catalytic syntheses of aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> **2** have been achieved by deuteration of the Breslow intermediates,<sup>9</sup> deuteration of acyl radicals,<sup>6,10</sup> and transition metal-catalysed deuterium incorporation.<sup>11</sup> However, the previous synthetic methods including the modern direct syntheses often suffered from drawbacks such as over-deuteration, requirements of harsh conditions (high and low temperature, and strong base and acids), and the use of

expensive catalysts. Moreover, the synthetic examples of substituted acrolein and propynal-*d*<sub>1</sub> are much less than those of alkyl and aryl aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub>,<sup>12,13</sup> though recently developed NHC-catalysed H–D exchange reactions allowed access to various substituted acrolein-*d*<sub>1</sub> derivatives.<sup>9</sup> In this context, development of a new *d*-incorporation method which allows flexible synthesis of aromatic and unsaturated aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> **2** remains to be a challenging synthetic task (Scheme 1).

Method A using D<sup>−</sup> as a deuterium source has been recognized as a robust and conventional synthetic method to prepare aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> **2** (Scheme 2). The synthesis is typically performed



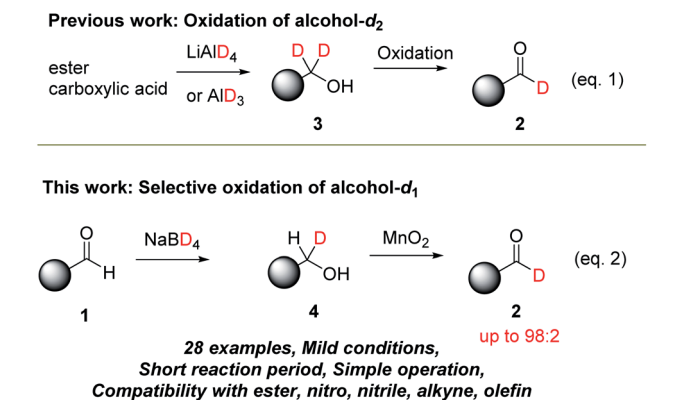
**Scheme 1** Synthesis of aldehyde-*d*<sub>1</sub> derivatives. (A) reduction of the formyl with D<sup>−</sup> and oxidation, (B) carbonyl Umpolung approach, (C) radical H–D exchange, (D) transition metal-catalysed H–D exchange, and (E) others.

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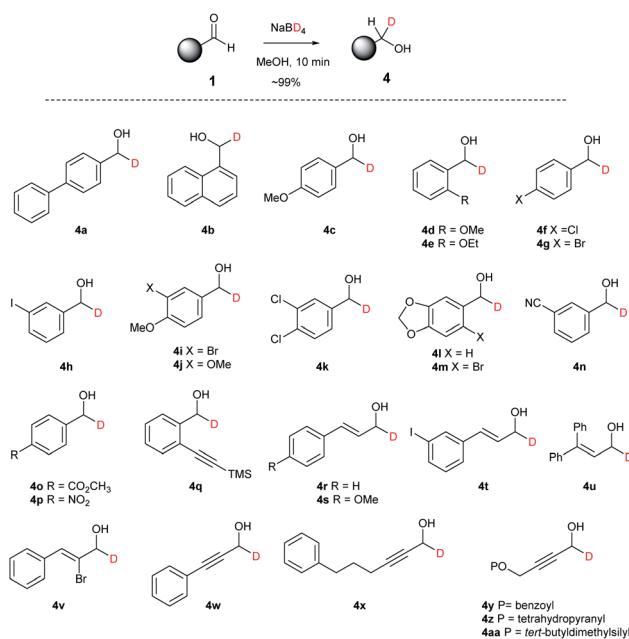
**Scheme 2** Oxidation of deuterated alcohols. Eqn (1): oxidation of alcohol- $d_2$ , eqn (2): selective oxidation of alcohol- $d_1$ .

in two steps; (i) reduction of carboxylic acid derivatives using  $\text{LiAlD}_4$  to provide alcohol- $d_2$  **3** and (ii) oxidation to aldehyde- $d_1$  **2** (eqn (1)).<sup>14</sup> In this approach, the deuterium incorporation ratio (%D) of the commercially available  $\text{D}^-$  sources such as  $\text{LiAlD}_4$  (>98 atom) is reliably transferred into the product. On the other hand, the use of highly reactive  $\text{LiAlD}_4$  often limits the synthetic scope. Under the conditions, various functional groups such as nitro, nitrile, ester, and acid moieties, and alkene and alkyne with electron-withdrawing group(s) are not tolerated. To overcome the limitation, we emerged selective oxidation of alcohol- $d_1$  derivatives **4** (Scheme 2 (eqn (2))). It is expected that various alcohol- $d_1$  **4** can be prepared by the mild  $\text{NaBD}_4$  reduction. The next selective oxidation of D (H/D selectivity) is the key to this approach. Recently, oxidation of benzyl alcohol- $d_1$  ( $\text{PhCDHOH}$ ) with PCC or PDC was conducted to prepare  $\text{PhCDO}$  with ~85% D.<sup>4a,4e,4g</sup> On the other hand, further efforts to improve the selectivity (%D) in the selective oxidation have not been well-examined. Herein, we would like to report that  $\text{NaBD}_4$  reduction followed by activated  $\text{MnO}_2$  oxidation ( $\text{NaBD}_4/\text{MnO}_2$  system). The simple and mild protocol allows expansion of the synthetic range of aldehyde- $d_1$  **2** including not only aromatic aldehyde- $d_1$  derivatives but also substituted acrolein- $d_1$  and propynal- $d_1$  derivatives with high %D (up to 98%).

## 2. Results and discussion

In a similar manner to the previous synthetic examples of  $\text{NaBH}_4$  reduction of aldehyde **1**, the reduction with  $\text{NaBD}_4$  gave the corresponding alcohol- $d_1$  derivatives **4** with excellent functional group compatibility and yields (Scheme 3). Chloride, bromide, iodide, methoxy, ethoxy, or methylene acetal, nitrile, ester, nitro, and alkyne groups on the aromatic ring of **4c–4q** were tolerated under the conditions. Substituted acrolein and propynal **1r–1aa** also underwent smooth  $\text{NaBD}_4$  reduction to provide **4r–4aa** without loss of the alkyne and alkene moieties, and tetrahydropyran (THP), benzoyl (Bz), and *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl (TBS) protecting groups.

We next examined the key oxidation of alcohol- $d_1$  **4** using 4-phenylbenzyl alcohol- $d_1$  (**4a**) (Table 1). As a result, activated  $\text{MnO}_2$  was found to be superior to other general oxidation



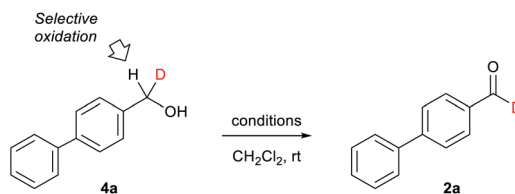
**Scheme 3** Reduction of aldehyde **1** with  $\text{NaBD}_4$ .

reagents (entry 1, Table 1). Treatment of **4a** with 23 eq. of  $\text{MnO}_2$  in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  gave aldehyde- $d_1$  **2a** with 92% D in 2 h. The use of pyridinium dichlorochromate (PDC) gave **2a** in good selectivity (88% D).<sup>4e</sup> However, the isolate yield was moderate (entry 2). Dess–Martin periodinane oxidation, 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine 1-oxyl (TEMPO) oxidation in the presence of  $\text{PhI}(\text{OAc})_2$ , and Parikh–Doering oxidation (sulfur trioxide–pyridine complex in dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO)) resulted in lower selectivities (74, 76 and 66%D, entries 3–5).

Activated  $\text{MnO}_2$  oxidation was successfully expanded to the synthesis of various aldehyde- $d_1$  **2a–2aa** with high %D (85–96% D) (Scheme 4A–C). Chloride, bromide, iodide, methoxy, ethoxy, or methylene acetal, nitrile, ester, nitro, and alkyne groups on the aromatic ring of **4c–4q** are preserved under the mild oxidation conditions (Scheme 4A). Substituted acrolein **4r–4v** and propynal **4w–4aa** smoothly underwent  $\text{MnO}_2$  oxidation to provide **2r–2aa** without loss of the alkene and alkyne moieties (Scheme 4B and C). The synthetic utility was further demonstrated by the synthesis of **2v** with a bromo group at the  $\alpha$ -position of cinnamaldehyde. In addition, Bz, THP, and TBS protecting groups of **4y**, **4z**, and **4aa** were also maintained under the conditions. These propargyl alcohols **4y**, **4z**, and **4aa** were smoothly converted to the corresponding propynal derivatives **2y**, **2z**, and **2aa** with high %D, respectively.

In conjunction with our recent efforts toward elucidation of biosynthetic reaction mechanisms of terpene synthases using  $d$ -labelled prenols,<sup>15,16</sup> we needed geranylgeraniol- $d_2$  (**6**) as an enzyme substrate. Previously, the synthesis of **6** (ref. 17) and other acyclic prenol- $d_2$  derivatives<sup>18</sup> was performed in four steps from **5** via reduction of ester **7** with  $\text{LiAlD}_4$ . However, commercially available  $\text{LiAlD}_4$  is almost out of stock in recent years. In addition, low temperature conditions ( $-20^\circ\text{C}$ ) is required for the  $\text{LiAlD}_4$  reduction to avoid the undesired 1,4-reduction. We



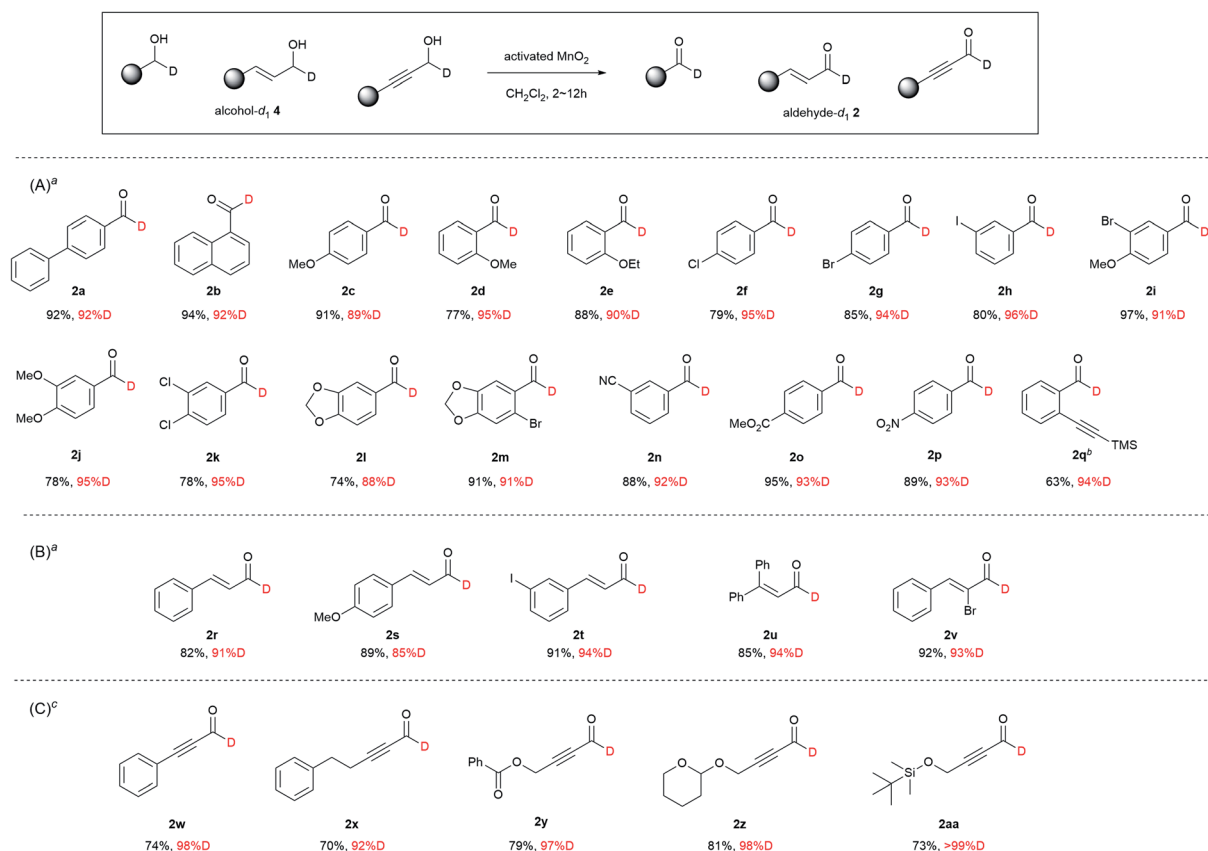
Table 1 Oxidation of alcohol- $d_1$  **4a**<sup>a</sup>

Entry	Conditions	Yield <sup>b</sup> (%)	%D <sup>c</sup>
1	MnO <sub>2</sub> (23 eq.), 1 h	92	92
2	PDC (1.2 eq.), MS4A, 2 h	51	88
3	Dess–Martin periodinane (1.5 eq.), 5 min	84	74
4	TEMPO (0.01 eq.), Bu <sub>4</sub> NHSO <sub>4</sub> (0.05 eq.), NaOCl (1.2 eq.), 1 h	96	76
5	DMSO (10 eq.), SO <sub>3</sub> –pyridine (4 eq.), <i>i</i> Pr <sub>2</sub> NEt (5 eq.), 1.5 h	75	66

<sup>a</sup> 0.5 mmol scale. <sup>b</sup> Isolated yield. <sup>c</sup> %D for **2a** is calculated based on the integration ratios of aldehyde and aromatic proton. MnO<sub>2</sub> = activated manganese dioxide, PDC = pyridinium dichlorochromate, MS4A = molecular sieves 4A, TEMPO = 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine 1-oxyl, DMSO = dimethyl sulfoxide.

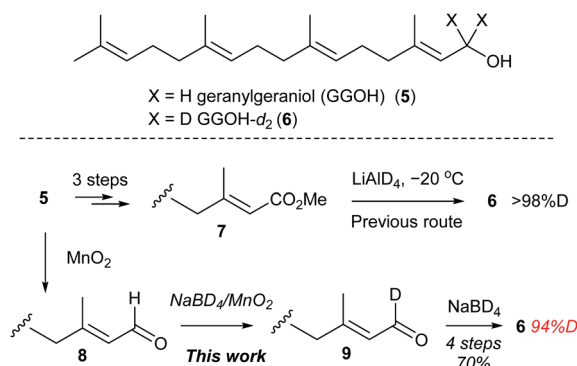
expected that NaBD<sub>4</sub>/MnO<sub>2</sub> system would be an alternative to the LiAlD<sub>4</sub> procedure to prepare **6**, conveniently. According to the literature,<sup>19</sup> geranylgeraniol (**5**) was converted to aldehyde **8** by MnO<sub>2</sub> oxidation (Scheme 5). Aldehyde **8** was subjected to NaBD<sub>4</sub>/MnO<sub>2</sub> to deliver d-enriched aldehyde **9** which was

subsequently reduced by NaBD<sub>4</sub> to provide geranylgeraniol- $d_2$  (**6**) in 70% yield over four steps with satisfactory deuterium incorporation ratio (94% D). Under the conditions, the undesired 1,4-addition reaction was not observed. Thus, an



Scheme 4 MnO<sub>2</sub> oxidation of alcohol- $d_1$  **4**. (A) synthetic examples of aromatic aldehyde- $d_1$  **2**, (B) synthetic examples of substituted acrolein- $d_1$  **2**, and (C) synthetic examples of substituted propynal- $d_1$  **2**. <sup>a</sup> 2 h, <sup>b</sup> 6 h, <sup>c</sup> 12 h.





Scheme 5 Synthesis of geranylgeraniol- $d_2$  (6) from geranylgeraniol (5).

operationally simple and mild deuteration of prenols- $d_2$  was achieved by application of  $\text{NaBD}_4/\text{MnO}_2$  system.

Previously, Brecker *et al.* investigated  $^{13}\text{C}$  kinetic isotope effects (KIEs) in the oxidation of cinnamyl alcohol using  $\text{MnO}_2$ , Dess–Martin periodinane, and Swern oxidation ( $\text{DMSO}/(\text{COCl})_2/\text{Et}_3\text{N}$ ) to gain insight into the reaction mechanism.<sup>20</sup> Comparison of the kinetic isotope of effects revealed the following order  $\text{MnO}_2 > \text{Dess–Martin oxidation} \approx \text{Swern oxidation}$ . The higher  $^{13}\text{C}$  KIE using  $\text{MnO}_2$  displayed that the C–H bond breaking in the intermediate is irreversible and rate-determining, and the oxidation proceeded *via* energy rich transition state. On the other hand, the lower  $^{13}\text{C}$  KIEs observed in Swern oxidation and Dess–Martin oxidation indicated that the intramolecular C–H bond cleavage in these oxidation reaction processes would not be slower to be rate-limiting.

Experimental results in Table 1 clearly shows that the degrees of %D are as follows  $\text{MnO}_2 > \text{PDC} > \text{TEMPO} \approx \text{Dess–Martin} > \text{SO}_3\text{–pyridine/DMSO}$ . It is speculated that higher %D of  $\text{MnO}_2$  oxidation and lower %D of  $\text{SO}_3\text{–pyridine/DMSO}$  oxidation would correlate to the  $^{13}\text{C}$  KIE data ( $\text{MnO}_2 > \text{Swern oxidation}$ ). It is interesting to note that the %D value in Scheme 4 depended on the substrates. The oxidation of propargyl alcohols **4w–4aa** resulted in higher %D than those of the other alcohols. The oxidation of **4w–4aa** needed a longer reaction period to complete the reactions. As mentioned in the previous  $^{13}\text{C}$  KIE studies, the rate limiting steps of the  $\text{MnO}_2$  oxidation relies on the C–H cleavage step of the reaction intermediate. It is considered that the slower C–H cleavage would provide the higher %D.

### 3. Conclusions

We have established a facile synthesis of aldehyde- $d_1$  derivatives by  $\text{NaBD}_4/\text{MnO}_2$  system. The new method is characterized by a high degree of functional group compatibility and a wide range of substrate scope including the synthesis of d-containing unsaturated aldehydes. Aromatic aldehyde- $d_1$  derivatives such as **2c** and **2g** would be a useful synthetic intermediate for olefination, amination, hydride reduction, Suzuki cross coupling, and Sonogashira coupling reactions.<sup>9e,10c</sup> Substituted acroleins and propynals can be used for Michael addition reaction,

cycloaddition reaction, and transition metal catalysed transformations. In this context,  $\text{NaBD}_4/\text{MnO}_2$  system would offer vital opportunity to the synthesis of highly functionalized d-labelled molecules *via* facile preparation of aromatic and unsaturated aldehyde- $d_1$  **2**. Deuterium-labelled compounds are often needed for the investigation of the mechanisms or determination of the rate-limiting step. The present synthetic method supports the studies from the viewpoint of the facile preparation of aldehyde- $d_1$  **2** and its derivatives. Further application and mechanism studies are ongoing in our laboratory.

### Author contributions

Y. Yasuno and HO are contributed equally. Y. Yasuno, HO, and TS designed the synthetic route. TS wrote the manuscript. HO, Y. Yasuno, and AN prepared ESI.<sup>†</sup> HO, Y. Yasuno, AN, K. Kumadaki, K. Kitsuwu, KO, YT, and Y. Yamamoto performed syntheses of **2**.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

### Acknowledgements

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