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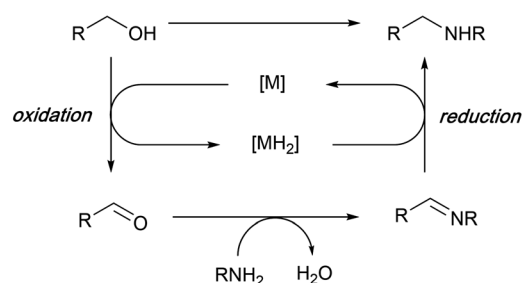
Ruthenium-catalysed *N*-alkylation of anilines with primary carbohydrate alcohols *via* borrowing hydrogen strategy†

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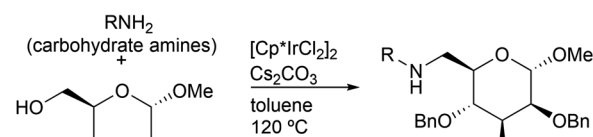
Ruthenium-catalysed *N*-alkylation of anilines with sugar derivatives proceeded *via* the borrowing hydrogen strategy. Primary carbohydrate alcohols were successfully applied to *N*-alkylation of aniline derivatives to give the corresponding aminosugars in high yields.

Transition-metal-catalysed *N*-alkylation of amines *via* the borrowing hydrogen strategy is a desirable process for the formation of carbon–nitrogen bonds, enabling alcohols to be employed directly as alkylating agents (Scheme 1a).¹ A variety of catalytic systems based on the late-transition metals have been developed for the *N*-alkylation of amines by using simple alcohols.^{2–5} Biomass-derived alcohols, such as ethylene glycol, 1,3-propanediol, isohexides, and so on, have also been recognized as important reaction partners in the borrowing hydrogen strategy.⁶ However, carbohydrate alcohols have been scarcely used for the direct *N*-alkylation reaction. In this respect, in 2011, Cumpsty and Martín-Matute reported the first example of *N*-alkylation of alkylamines derived from sugars with primary carbohydrate alcohols catalysed by an Ir(III) complex, where amine-linked pseudodisaccharides are successfully synthesized in a single step through borrowing hydrogen strategy (Scheme 1b).⁷ In this context, we recently reported α -alkylation of methyl ketones with primary carbohydrate alcohols as alkylating agents (Scheme 1c).⁸ The reaction is efficiently catalysed by an Ir(III) complex in the presence of a strong base. During our studies on the catalytic functionalization of sugar derivatives,^{8,9} it was found that a ruthenium complex was effective in catalyzing the borrowing hydrogen reaction between anilines and sugars (Scheme 1d). Here we describe that a ruthenium/dppf type ligand complex efficiently

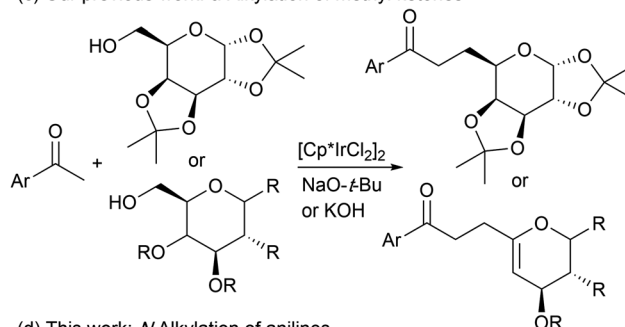
(a) *N*-Alkylation through borrowing hydrogen strategy



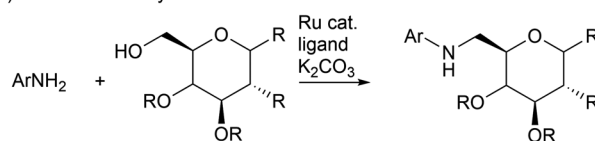
(b) Ir-catalysed *N*-alkylation of carbohydrate amines



(c) Our previous work: α -Alkylation of methyl ketones



(d) This work: *N*-Alkylation of anilines



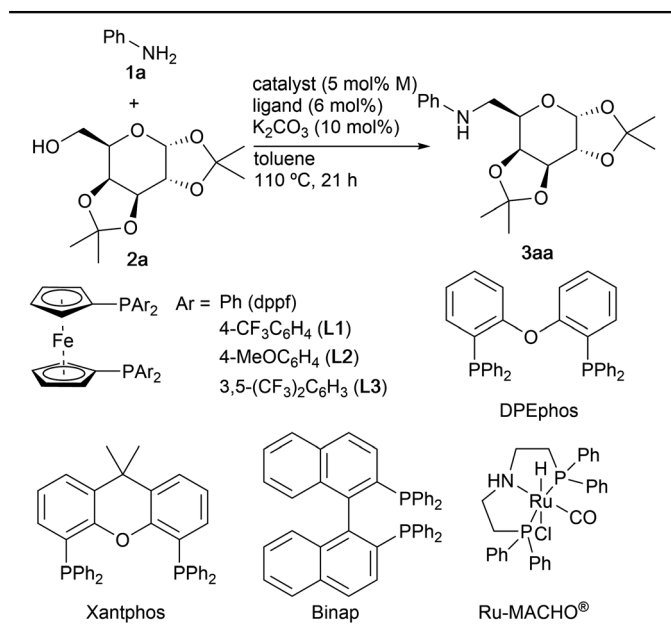
Scheme 1 Borrowing hydrogen reactions.

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Table 1 Ruthenium-catalysed *N*-alkylation of aniline **1a** with galactopyranose **2a**^a

Entry	Catalyst	Ligand	Yield ^b (%)
1	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	dppf	31
2	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	—	0
3 ^c	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	dppf	0
4	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	L1	69
5	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	L2	6
6	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	L3	0
7	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	DPEphos	15
8	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	Xantphos	6
9	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	Binap	0
10 ^d	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	L1	76
11 ^{de}	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	L1	45
12 ^{df}	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	L1	53
13 ^{dg}	$[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$	L1	87 (82) ^h
14	$[RuCl_2(\text{benzene})]_2$	L1	7
15 ^{cd}	$Ru_3(CO)_{12}$	—	0
16 ^d	$Ru_3(CO)_{12}$	—	0
17 ^d	Ru-MACHO [®]	—	0

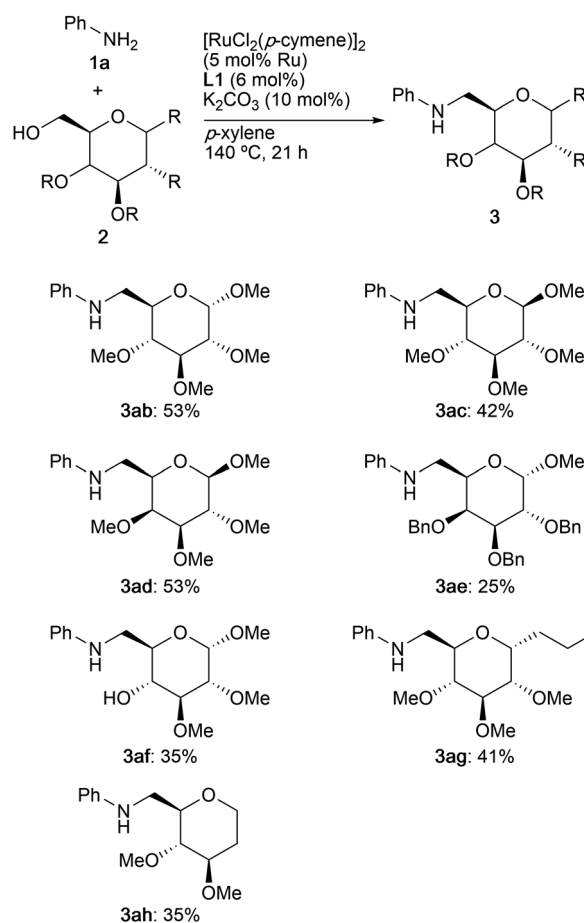
^a Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.24 mmol), **2a** (0.20 mmol), $[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$ (0.0050 mmol, 5 mol% of Ru), and base (10 mol%) in toluene (0.30 mL) at 110 °C for 21 h. ^b Determined by ¹H NMR. ^c Without K_2CO_3 . ^d Performed with **1a** (0.20 mmol) and **2a** (0.24 mmol). ^e With Na_2CO_3 instead of K_2CO_3 . ^f With Cs_2CO_3 instead of K_2CO_3 . ^g At 140 °C in *p*-xylene. ^h Isolated yield.

catalyses *N*-alkylation of anilines with primary carbohydrate alcohols, providing a new method for the synthesis of aminosugar derivatives.¹⁰ Aminosugars possess potential properties that take part in a variety of biological functions, and therefore, the development of the synthesis of the aminosugars is important for the understanding of their functions.¹¹

Our initial studies focused on the *N*-alkylation of aniline (**1a**) with 1,2:3,4-di-*O*-isopropylidene- α -D-galactopyranose (**2a**) in the presence of ruthenium complexes directed toward the catalytic synthesis of aminosugar **3aa** (Table 1).¹² Treatment of **1a** (1.2 equiv.) with **2a** (1.0 equiv.) in the presence of $[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$ (5 mol% of Ru), dppf (6 mol%), and K_2CO_3 (10 mol%) in toluene, which is one of the reaction conditions

reported by Williams and co-workers,^{2c} at 110 °C for 21 h gave alkylated product **3aa** in 31% yield (entry 1). The ligand and base were necessary to obtain **3aa** (entries 2 and 3). The aryl groups on dppf ligands significantly influenced the reactivity. The use of ligand **L1** substituted with *p*-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl groups improved the yield of **3aa** up to 69% (entry 4). In contrast, methoxy-substituted **L2** diminished the yield (entry 5), and ligand **L3** inhibited the reaction, probably due to the bulkiness (entry 6). DPEphos, Xantphos, or Binap were not effective in catalyzing the present reaction (entries 7–9). The use of a slight excess (1.2 equiv.) of alcohol **2a** toward aniline (**1a**) improved the yield up to 76% (entry 10). Na_2CO_3 and Cs_2CO_3 were less effective than K_2CO_3 , thus giving **3aa** in 45 and 53% yields, respectively (entries 11 and 12). The reaction in *p*-xylene at 140 °C gave **3aa** in 87% yield (entry 13). The catalytic activity of $[RuCl_2(\text{benzene})]_2$ was quite low (entry 14). $Ru_3(CO)_{12}$ ^{2d} and Ru-MACHO^{®2j} did not work as catalysts (entries 15–17).

Scheme 2 summarizes the results obtained for the reaction of several primary carbohydrate alcohols. The reactions of *O*-methylated α -glucose **2b**, β -glucose **2c**, and β -galactose **2d** with aniline (**1a**) gave the corresponding sugars **3ab–3ad** in 42–53%



Scheme 2 Scope of carbohydrate alcohols. Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.10 mmol), **2** (0.12 mmol), $[RuCl_2(p\text{-cymene})]_2$ (0.0025 mmol, 5 mol% of Ru), **L1** (6 mol%) and K_2CO_3 (10 mol%) in *p*-xylene (0.15 mL) at 140 °C for 21 h.



yields. Alcohol **2e** having benzyl ether moieties and **2f** with a free hydroxy group reacted with **1a** to give *N*-alkylated products **3ae** and **3af** in 25% and 35% yields, respectively. The reaction of *C*-glycoside **2g** and deoxyglucose **2h** also proceeded to give the corresponding aminosugars **3ag** and **3ah**.

A variety of aniline derivatives **1** participated in the reaction with carbohydrate alcohol **2a** as summarized in Scheme 3. *N*-Alkylation of anilines having electron-donating and -withdrawing substituents (**2a–2m**) at the *o*-, *m*-, and *p*-positions proceeded to give the corresponding aminosugars in 18–97% yields, where anilines substituted with electron-withdrawing groups displayed the low reactivity. In particular, the loss of the catalytic activity was observed in reaction of *p*-bromoaniline (**1f**). Dimethyl (**1n**) and dimethoxyanilines (**1o** and **1p**) reacted with **2a** to give aminosugars **3na**, **3oa**, and **3pa**, respectively, in high yields. Modest yields were observed for 3,4,5-trifluoroaniline (**1q**), 5-methoxy-1-naphthylamine (**1r**), and 6-methyl-2-aminopyridine (**1s**). In sharp contrast, *N*-methylaniline or aliphatic amines such as *n*-butylamine and piperidine were not alkylated under the present reaction conditions.

In summary, we have developed ruthenium-catalysed *N*-alkylation of anilines with primary carbohydrate alcohols. A variety of aniline derivatives were applied to the reaction to give

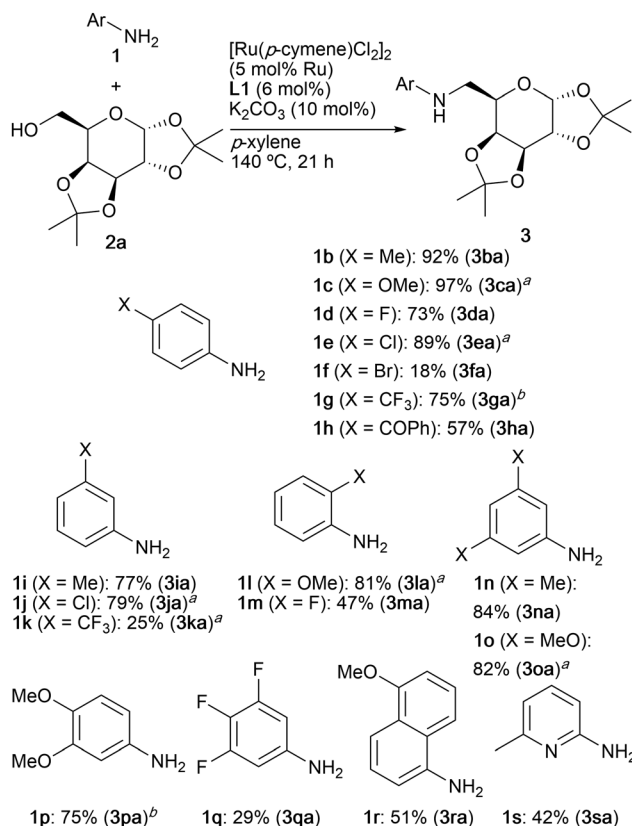
the corresponding aminosugars in high yields. Several *O*-protected sugar derivatives could be used as alkylating agents for *N*-alkylation of aniline derivatives.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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Scheme 3 Scope of anilines **1**. Reaction conditions: **1** (0.10 mmol), **2a** (0.12 mmol), $[\text{RuCl}_2(\text{p-cymene})_2]$ (0.0025 mmol, 5 mol% of Ru), ligand (6 mol%), and K_2CO_3 (10 mol%) in *p*-xylene (0.15 mL) at 140 °C for 21 h. ^a0.20 mmol scale reaction. ^bFor 48 h.



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