

Stereospecific Isomerization of Allylic Halides via Ion Pairs with Induced Noncovalent Chirality

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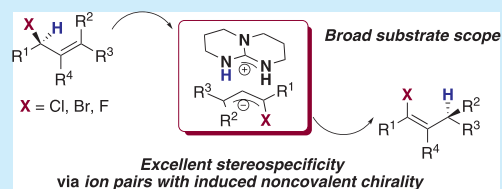


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ABSTRACT: A regioselective protocol for the synthesis of substituted allylic chlorides, bromides, and fluorides has been established. Remarkably, the method can be applied to the enantioselective synthesis of challenging chiral allylic chlorides. When the allylic halides are treated with the base triazabicyclodecene as the catalyst, a [1,3]-proton shift takes place, giving the corresponding vinyl halides in excellent yields with excellent *Z:E* ratios. Furthermore, the [1,3]-proton shift takes place with an outstanding level of chirality transfer from chiral allylic alcohols ($\leq 98\%$) to give chiral trifluoromethylated vinyl chlorides.



The direct transfer of a hydrogen atom across an allylic system by a [1,3]-sigmatropic shift is thermally forbidden, both supra- and antarafacially.¹ Thus, when a catalyst promotes this process, the reaction must proceed in a stepwise manner via one or more intermediates.² A relevant example of this class of reaction is the isomerization of allylic alcohols into carbonyl compounds, a synthetic transformation in organic chemistry.³ In recent decades, significant work has been put into the development of methods for performing this isomerization efficiently,^{4–6} in some instances even under mild reaction conditions, and with a large substrate scope. Different transition-metal catalysts have been used, in particular, ruthenium, rhodium, palladium, and iridium.⁶

The isomerization of allylic alcohols can be described as a formal [1,3]-hydrogen shift. Under catalytic conditions, we may understand that the reaction proceeds via a series of intermediates. These species could be harnessed and applied in further transformations, opening up new synthetic opportunities. Our group has shown that in the presence of a range of different electrophiles and even nucleophiles, α -substituted ketones are formed as single constitutional isomers.^{7,8}

Because of the stepwise nature of the catalytic [1,3]-hydrogen shift reactions, stereospecific examples of this transformation are rare.^{9–11} In 2012, Cahard and co-workers reported an outstanding stereospecific isomerization of enantiopure β -trifluoromethylated allylic alcohols catalyzed by an achiral ruthenium complex.^{10a} In 2016, we reported the stereospecific isomerization of electron-deficient allylic alcohols and ethers mediated by a simple guanidine-type base, triazabicyclodecene (TBD), thus, in the absence of a metal catalyst.¹¹ This reaction showed excellent levels of stereospecificity (i.e., chirality transfer), yielding β -substituted ketones and enol ethers with excellent enantiomeric ratios. A similar interaction has also recently been proposed for the stereospecific isomerization of 3-substituted indenols using 1,4-diazabicyclo[2.2.2]octane (DABCO).¹²

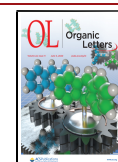
For allylic systems, a stereospecific base-catalyzed [1,3]-hydrogen shift has been reported for only allylic alcohols and ethers.^{11,12} The application of this approach to other allylic systems would create new synthetic methods and provide access to new chiral scaffolds. For example, the stereospecific isomerization of allylic halides would yield chiral vinyl halides, which are very versatile building blocks in organic chemistry.¹³ Examples of the isomerization of allylic halides into vinyl halides are very rare,¹⁴ and no stereospecific examples have been reported. This is due to the difficulty in the synthesis of chiral allylic halides, as they are very prone to racemization.¹⁵

In this paper, we report a method for the regioselective synthesis of γ -trifluoromethylated allylic chlorides, bromides, and fluorides, and the isomerization of these compounds into vinyl halides using the bicyclic guanidine base TBD as a catalyst (Scheme 1a). Furthermore, we also report the regio- and enantioselective synthesis of allylic chlorides and the first stereospecific base-catalyzed isomerization of these compounds into chiral vinyl chlorides (Scheme 1b).

Several protocols for the synthesis of allylic halides from the corresponding alcohols have been reported in the literature.¹⁶ However, these methods suffer from low regioselectivity due to competing S_N1' and S_N2' pathways.¹⁷ We thus started our investigations by developing a method for the regioselective synthesis of allylic chlorides. We used γ -trifluoromethylated allylic chloride **1a** as a model substrate (Table 1). Treatment of **1a** with SOCl_2 (1 equiv) in THF gave a mixture of **2a**, **2a'**, and **2a''** in 78% combined yield (Table 1, entry 1).

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Scheme 1. (a) Regioselective Synthesis and [1,3]-Proton Shift of Allylic Chlorides, Bromides, and Fluorides and (b) Enantioselective Synthesis of Chiral Allylic Chlorides and Stereospecific [1,3]-Proton Shift

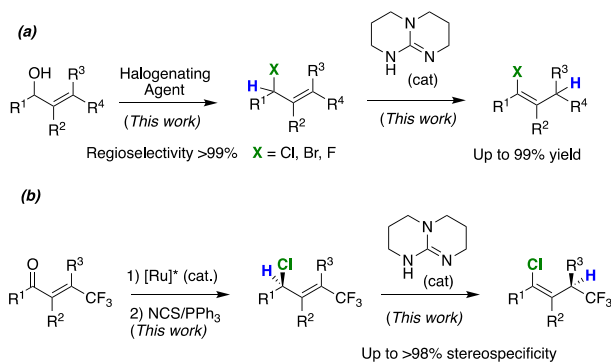


Table 1. Regioselective Synthesis of 2a^a

entry	Cl source	solvent	yield (%)	2a:2a':2a''
1	SOCl ₂	THF	78	82:12:6
2	SOCl ₂	Et ₂ O	83	76:16:8
3	SOCl ₂	CH ₂ Cl ₂	83	88:12:—
4	SOCl ₂ ^b	CH ₂ Cl ₂	47	80:14:6
5	PCl ₃	CH ₂ Cl ₂	80	96:4:—
6	PCl ₅	CH ₂ Cl ₂	50	98:2:—
7	POCl ₃	CH ₂ Cl ₂	52	12:—:— ^c
8	NCS/PPh ₃ ^d	CH ₂ Cl ₂	40	94:6:—
9	NCS/PPh ₃ ^d	THF	67	>99:—:—

^aUnless otherwise noted, **1a** (0.1 mmol, 0.1 M) and the chlorinating agent (0.1 mmol) at 0 °C overnight. ^bWith 0.1 mmol of pyridine. ^cAn unknown product was formed. ^dNCS (0.15 mmol) and PPh₃ (0.15 mmol).

In an attempt to improve the regioselectivity and minimize any *cis/trans* isomerization, several reaction parameters were varied. Changing the solvent had little effect on the outcome of the transformation (Table 1, entries 2 and 3). HCl formed in the reaction could promote the formation of carbocationic intermediates, leading to **2a'** and **2a''**. However, when a base was added to suppress the formation of HCl (Table 1, entry 4), significantly lower yields and low selectivity were obtained. Other chlorinating agents were then tested; PCl₃ and PCl₅ gave significantly better results in terms of selectivity (Table 1, entries 5 and 6, respectively), albeit with moderate yields. POCl₃ gave similar results, but the reaction also gave an unidentified byproduct (Table 1, entry 7). When the reaction was carried out with NCS (*N*-chlorosuccinimide) and PPh₃ in CH₂Cl₂, we obtained excellent selectivity [94:6 **2a:2a'** (Table 1, entry 8)] and a moderate yield.¹⁸ Gratifyingly, when the reaction was performed in THF, **2a** was formed 67% yield with complete regioselectivity (Table 1, entry 9). Moreover, similar conditions (Scheme 2a) using NBS (*N*-bromosuccinimide) gave allylic bromide **3a** in 62% yield (Scheme 2a). Allylic fluoride **4a** was also accessed using DAST (*N,N*-diethylamino-sulfur trifluoride), with complete regioselectivity (Scheme 2b).¹⁹

The [1,3]-hydrogen shift of **2a** to give vinyl chloride **5a** was then investigated using various bases at 60 °C (Table 2). With

Scheme 2. Regioselective Synthesis of γ -Trifluoromethylated Allylic Bromide **3a and Fluoride **4a****

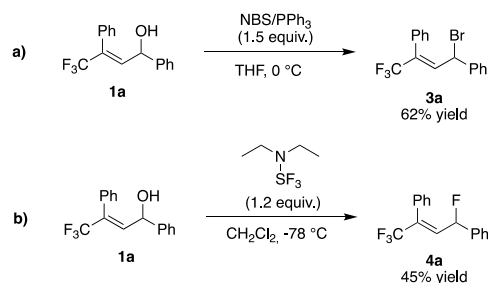


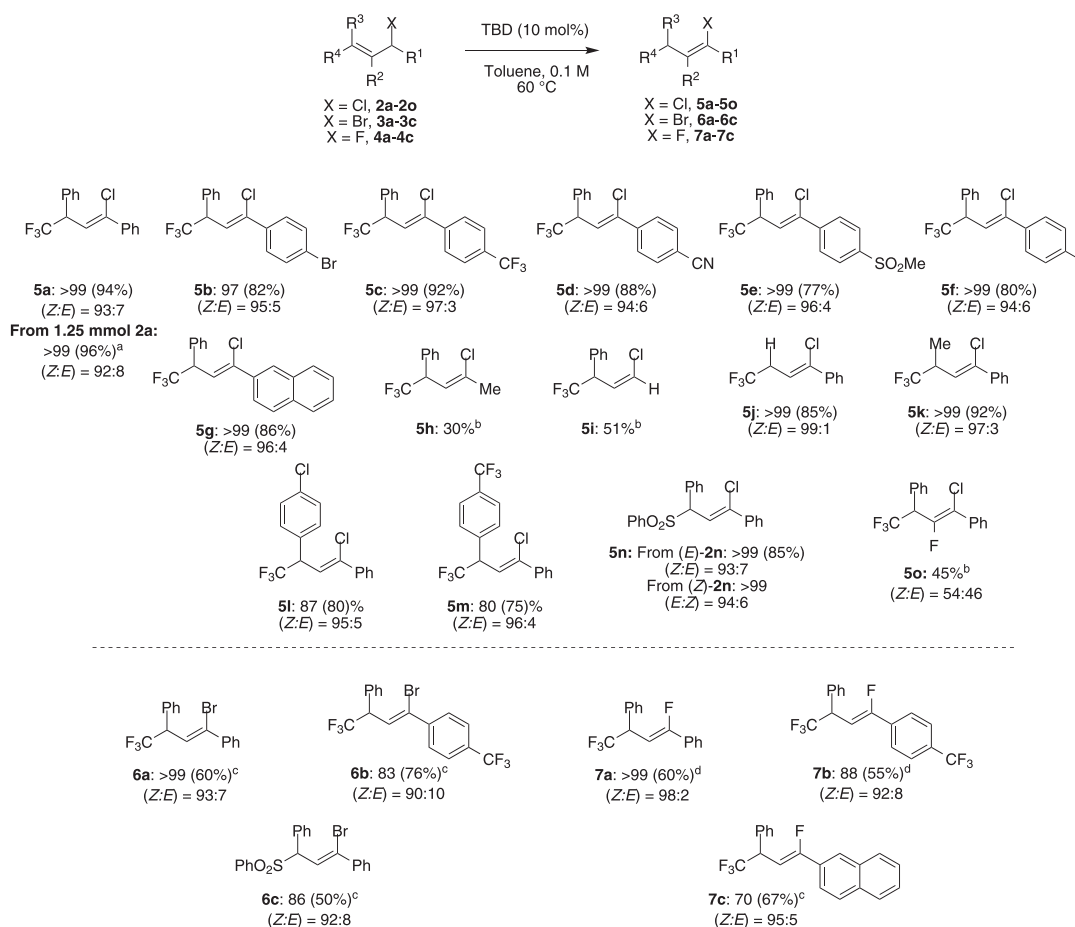
Table 2. Base-Catalyzed Isomerization of 2a^a

entry	base (equiv)	solvent	conversion ^b (%)	yield ^{b,c} (%)
1	NEt ₃ (1.0)	toluene	<5	— ^d
2	Cs ₂ CO ₃ (1.0)	toluene	<5	— ^d
3	DBU (1.0)	toluene	>99	71 ^e
4	TBD (1.0)	toluene	>99	46 ^e
5	DBU (0.1)	toluene	86	86 ^e
6	TBD (0.1)	toluene	>99	>99
7	MTBD (0.1)	toluene	90	81 ^e
8	TBD (0.1)	THF	90	84 ^e
9	TBD (0.1)	CH ₂ Cl ₂	67	60 ^e
10	TBD (0.1)	dioxane	78	78 ^e
11	TBD (0.1)	MeCN	38	20 ^e

^a**2a** (0.1 mmol, 0.1 M), base, overnight at 60 °C. ^bDetermined by ¹⁹F NMR spectroscopy. ^cAgainst an internal standard. ^d>95% **2a** recovered. ^eDecomposition observed.

NET₃ or Cs₂CO₃ in a stoichiometric amount, <5% of **5a** was obtained (Table 2, entry 1 or 2, respectively). In contrast, with 1 equiv of the more basic DBU or TBD, full conversions were obtained, giving **5a** in 71% or 46% yield, respectively (Table 2, entry 3 or 4, respectively). In both instances, though, decomposition products were detected. With a smaller amount of base (0.1 equiv), the level of decomposition also decreased (Table 2, entries 5 and 6). DBU gave a good yield of 86%, but TBD gave a >99% yield of **2a** after the same reaction time (18 h). The use of 7-methyl-1,5,7-triazabicyclo[4.4.0]dec-5-ene [MTBD (Table 2, entry 7)] afforded **5a** in 81% yield, and full conversion was not achieved. It was also observed that more polar solvents such as CH₂Cl₂ and MeCN always gave lower yields due to the formation of decomposition products (Table 2, entries 8–11).

Next, the scope was studied (Scheme 3) using the optimized reaction conditions (Table 2, entry 6). When an electron-withdrawing or electron-donating group was present at the *para* position of the aryl group at R¹, excellent yields were obtained in all instances (**5b–5f**). Even when R¹ was a naphthyl group, **5g** was obtained in very good yield. The products were all formed with very good *Z:E* ratios, up to 96:4. Further study of the substituents at R¹ revealed some limitations of the reaction. When R¹ was CH₃ or H, vinyl chlorides **5h** and **5i** were obtained in lower yields (30% and 51%, respectively). Moreover, the introduction of alkyl groups, aryl groups, or even H at R³ was very well tolerated, and vinyl chlorides **5j–5m** were formed in very good yields. Importantly, the CF₃ group at R⁴ could be replaced with a sulfonyl group,

Scheme 3. Scope of the Base-Catalyzed Isomerization of Allylic Halides^e

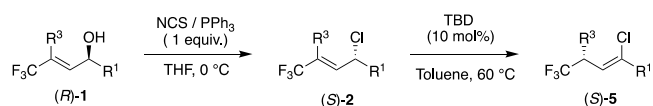
^a**2a** (1.25 mmol, 371 mg), TBD (0.125 mmol, 17 mg). ^bConversion measured by ¹⁹F NMR. ^cTBD (30 mol %), 100 °C. ^d*o*-Xylene as a solvent at 145 °C. ^eYields determined by ¹⁹F NMR spectroscopy (isolated yields in parentheses).

and **5n** was obtained in excellent yield from both (E)-**2n** and (Z)-**2n**. Highly substituted allylic chloride **2o** gave a good 45% yield of **5o** with 20 mol % TBD.

We also investigated the isomerization of allylic bromides **3** and fluorides **4**. Both of these allylic substrates proved to be more challenging than the allylic chlorides. After a short optimization (see the Supporting Information), vinyl bromide **6a** could be obtained in a good yield of 60% by using 30 mol % TBD at 100 °C. When an electron-withdrawing group was introduced into the aromatic group at R¹ (**3b**), **83%** was obtained with only 10 mol % TBD. Sulfonyl-substituted **3c** isomerized well to **6c** in 86% yield. Allylic fluorides **4a-4c** showed lower reactivity, and a higher temperature of 145 °C was needed to reach full conversion. Under these conditions, vinyl fluorides **7a-7c** were obtained with excellent Z:E ratios (≤98:2).

Next the stereospecificity of the reaction was investigated. To do this, a method for the enantioselective preparation of **2a** had to be established.²⁰ This is a challenging task, as benzyl and allyl groups can both stabilize transient cationic species that may form during the preparation of chiral allylic halides.²¹ As a result, S_N1 pathways are favored and racemization occurs. The reaction of chiral (R)-**1a** (er of 99:1)^{10a} gave allylic chloride (S)-**2a** regioselectively with an er of 77:23 (Table 3, entry 1, and Table S4). When the electron density of R¹ was decreased, the racemization also decreased (Table 3, entries

Table 3. Stereospecific Synthesis and Stereospecific 1,3-Proton Shift of Allylic Chlorides^a



entry	(R)-1, R ¹ /R ³ , er	(S)-2 er	(S)-5 er ^b	ss ^c (%)
1	1a , Ph/Ph, 99:1	77:23	76:24 (99)	96
2	1b , <i>p</i> -BrC ₆ H ₄ /Ph, 97:3	79:21	77:23 (99)	95
3 ^d	1d , <i>p</i> -CNC ₆ H ₄ /Ph, 94:6	82:18	81:19 (92)	98
4 ^d	1e , <i>p</i> -SO ₂ MeC ₆ H ₄ /Ph, 93:7	87:13	76:24 (99)	70
5 ^e	1c , <i>p</i> -CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄ /Ph, 95:5	94:6	92:8 (99)	95
6	1m , Ph/Me, 95:5	68:32	66:34 (99)	94

^a(S)-**2** prepared as in Table 1, entry 9, but with 1 equiv of NCS/PPh₃ from (R)-**1**. Unless otherwise noted, **5** was obtained as in Table 2, entry 6. er is the enantiomeric ratio. ^bIn parentheses, yields by ¹⁹F NMR spectroscopy. ^cStereospecificity = ss = (ee of product **5**/ee of **2**) × 100. ^d**5** prepared at 0 °C for 1 h. ^e**5** prepared at room temperature for 1 h.

2-5). This effect was more pronounced for the purely inductively electron-withdrawing CF₃ group (**1c**, Table 3, entry 5); (S)-**2c** was obtained with an er of 94:6. In addition, a Me group at R³ also gave allyl chloride (S)-**2m**, with an er of 68:32 (Table 3, entry 6). Therefore, the best results are obtained for substrates with substituents that do not stabilize cationic

species, preventing the chlorination from proceeding by S_N1 pathways. Importantly, the isomerization of (*S*)-**2a** into (*S*)-**5a** took place with an excellent level of chirality transfer of 96% (Table 3, entry 1).

The absolute configuration of (*S*)-**5a** was determined by transforming it into a known β -trifluoromethylated ketone (see the Supporting Information). The stereochemistries of the other products were assigned by analogy. The exceptional transfer of chirality was also achieved for (*S*)-**2b**, (*S*)-**2c**, and (*S*)-**2d** (Table 3, entries 2, 3, and 5, respectively). An exception was (*S*)-**2e**, which bears a polar sulfonyl group; a minor loss of chirality was observed (Table 3, entry 4). Chloride (*S*)-**5m** was also obtained with a high stereosepecificity of 94% (Table 3, entry 6).

The mechanism is proposed to be a suprafacial [1,3]-proton shift (Figure 1), which likely is thermodynamically driven as

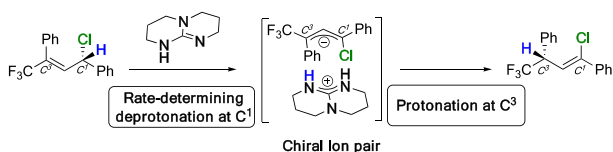


Figure 1. Mechanism through a tight chiral ion pair.

previously observed in related suprafacial proton shifts.^{11,12} We carried out parallel isomerization reactions of **2a** and **2a-d₁** and observed a large kinetic isotope effect of 5.4 ± 0.6 (see the Supporting Information). This suggests that the deprotonation of C^1 is the rate-determining step of the reaction. The high stereospecificity of the reaction indicates a highly efficient transfer of chirality from the starting chiral allylic chloride to the ion pair intermediate. Noncovalent chirality is induced on this ion pair, as interaction of the protonated base with the achiral planar allylic anion occurs exclusively from one specific side. As long as the ion pair remains tight, the chirality can be further transferred stereospecifically to the final product upon protonation of C^3 (Figure 1). In conclusion, we have developed a method for the synthesis of allylic chlorides, bromides, and fluorides from allylic alcohols with full control of the regioselectivity. Furthermore, from enantiopure allylic alcohols, a new stereospecific chlorination reaction has been developed, giving access to γ -trifluoromethylated allylic chlorides in high enantiomeric ratios for the first time. The allylic halides were transformed in a single step into vinyl halides, important intermediates in synthetic organic chemistry. The reaction takes place by a stereospecific [1,3]-proton shift pathway catalyzed by the bicyclic guanidine base TBD. When applied to enantioenriched γ -trifluoromethylated allylic chlorides, the simple base catalyst can transfer the chirality affording vinyl chlorides with a stereogenic center at the allylic position, on a trifluoromethylated carbon. Formation of a very tight ion pair with induced noncovalent chirality, after a rate-determining deprotonation, is responsible for the outstanding levels of chirality transfer.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.orglett.0c01200>.

Details of experimental procedures and spectroscopic data (PDF)

NMR spectra (PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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