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Bromonitromethane: A Versatile Reagent in Organic Synthesis

Compiled by Jun-min Zhang

This feature focuses on a reagent chosen by a postgraduate, highlighting the uses and preparation of the reagent in current research

Jun-min Zhang was born in 1980 in Pingdingshan, Henan Province, P. R. of China. He received his B.Sc. degree in chemistry at Luoyang Normal University in 2004, and obtained his M.Sc. degree in organic chemistry from Suzhou University in 2007. Now he is working towards his Ph.D. degree at School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Sun Yat-sen University, under the supervision of Professor Ming Yan. His current research interests focus on asymmetric organocatalysis.

Industrial Institute of Fine Chemicals and Synthetic Drugs, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou 510006, P. R. of China.

E-mail: zhang.junmin@yahoo.com.cn

Dedicated to my dear research advisor Professor Ming Yan.

Introduction

Bromonitromethane (BrCH_2NO_2) has received considerable attention as a one-carbon synthon for the synthesis of a variety of important organic intermediates.¹ For examples, it was used in the synthesis of 2-nitrobenzofuran and 2-nitro-2,3-dihydrobenzofuran-3-ols,² nitrobenzothiophenes, and nitrothiazoles,³ polyfunctionalized nitrocyclopropanes.⁴ It has also been utilized in the synthesis of 1-bromo-1-nitroalken-2-ols⁵ and aryl nitromethanes.⁶ In addition, it could be used as a bromine donor.⁶

Abstracts

(A) 2-Nitrobenzo[*b*]furans **4** are prepared by reacting 2-hydroxybenzaldehydes **1** and bromonitromethane **2** at low temperature. The intermediate **3** is then quantitatively dehydrated by heating in acetic anhydride to provide **4** in good yields.²

Scheme 1

(B) Fishwick and co-workers described the preparation of 3-amino-2-nitrobenzo[*b*]thiophene (**a**) starting from 2-sulfanylbenezonitrile and bromonitromethane.³ Several 3-amino-2-nitrothiophenes were prepared starting from the sodium salt of disubstituted 3-sulfanyl-2-propenenitriles and bromonitromethane.³ The compounds **b** were obtained in the yields ranging from 30% to 70%. In another paper, thiophene **c** was synthesized by Gewald and Hain, starting from disubstituted β -chloroacrylonitrile, sodium sulfide and bromonitromethane.⁷ The formation of 5-phenyl-3-amino-2-nitroselenophene (**d**) was also observed.

(C) Recently, Kirsch and co-workers described a one-pot procedure to prepare new 2-aryl-5-nitrothiophenes efficiently from bromonitromethane and 3-chloro-3-aryl-propenals,^{1a} and to prepare substituted 3-amino-2-nitrothiophenes and selenophenes from β -chloroacrylonitriles and bromonitromethane.^{1b}

(D) Shen and co-workers described a reaction of aldehydes and bromonitromethane in the presence of tri-*n*-butylarsine. The reaction provided substituted 1-bromo-1-nitroalkenes in good yields.⁸

(E) Concellón and co-workers described an efficient synthesis of 1-bromo-1-nitroalken-2-ols. The reaction of bromonitromethane and a variety of aldehydes was catalyzed by NaI under mild conditions. While chiral *N,N*-dibenzyl alaninal was used, the corresponding (1*S*,2*S*,3*S*)-3-dibenzylamino-1-bromo-1-nitrobutan-2-ol was obtained with excellent stereoselectivity.⁵ In addition they also reported a samarium-promoted synthesis of (*E*)-nitroalkenes from 1-bromo-1-nitroalken-2-ols in good yields.⁹

(F) Alcaide and co-workers reported a coupling reaction of azetidine-2,3-diones (α -oxo- β -lactams) and bromonitromethane in aqueous media and in the presence of catalytic amounts of sodium azide. The stereoselectivity of the process was generally good and reasonable *anti/syn* ratios were achieved by substrate control. Based on the reaction, a simple and efficient synthesis of the potentially bioactive 3-substituted 3-hydroxy- β -lactam moiety has been developed. 2-Azetidinone-tethered 1-halo-1-nitroalken-2-ols are highly useful building blocks. For example, they can be converted into spiro and fused bicyclic- β -lactams.¹⁰

(G) Nitrocyclopropane has been successfully prepared by the reaction of bromonitromethane, potassium carbonate and electrophilic alkenes bearing electron-withdrawing groups both in the α - and β -positions. The method provided good yields and moderate to good diastereoselectivity for linear alkenes. The *exo*-products were exclusively formed for *N*-alkylmaleimides.^{4b}

(H) Ley and co-workers reported the first organocatalytic enantioselective nitrocyclopropanation of 2-cyclohexen-1-one and bromonitromethane with good yields and enantioselectivities. 5-(Pyrrolidin-2-yl)-1*H*-tetrazole was used as the efficient catalyst.¹¹ Recently, the same group developed a general organocatalytic synthesis of chiral nitrocyclopropanes from bromonitromethane and a variety of cyclic and acyclic enones.¹² Wang and co-workers reported the same reaction catalyzed by chiral primary amines. Good yields and excellent enantioselectivities were achieved.¹³ Very recently, Yan and co-workers reported an efficient synthesis of chiral 4-bromo-4-nitroketones via the asymmetric conjugate addition of bromonitromethane to alkyl vinyl ketones.¹⁴

(I) Córdova and co-workers described a novel organocatalytic nitrocyclopropanation of α,β -unsaturated aldehydes with bromonitromethane. 1-Nitro-2-formylcyclopropanes were obtained in good yields and with excellent enantioselectivities.¹⁵ Recently, Yan and co-workers used MeOH-AcONa instead of $\text{CHCl}_3\text{-Et}_3\text{N}$ resulting in better yields for a variety of substrates.¹⁶

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