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*Published in:*  
Russian Chemical Bulletin, International Edition

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*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2001

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

### *Citation for published version (APA):*

Kochetkov, K. A., Harutyunyan, S. R., Kuz'mina, N. A., Savel'eva, T. F., Maleev, V. I., Peregudov, A. S., ... Sagiyan, A. S. (2001). Asymmetric Michael reaction of diethyl malonate with crotonaldehyde catalyzed by chiral aminocarboxylates, amino alcoholates, and amino phenolates. *Russian Chemical Bulletin, International Edition*, 50(9), 1620-1624.

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# Organic Chemistry

## Asymmetric Michael reaction of diethyl malonate with crotonaldehyde catalyzed by chiral aminocarboxylates, amino alcoholates, and amino phenolates

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Alkali metal salts of substituted (*S*)-prolines, alkali metal alkoxides of (*S*)-prolinol, and Na salts of chiral substituted 2-amino-2'-hydroxy-1,1'-binaphthyls can catalyze the asymmetric Michael reaction of diethyl malonate with crotonaldehyde to give adducts in >90% yields with *ee* up to 40%. The influences of the catalyst structure, the nature of the alkali metal cation, temperature, the solvent, and salt additives on the reaction outcome were studied.

**Key words:** diethyl malonate, crotonaldehyde, asymmetric Michael reaction, chiral catalysts, alkali metal salts of substituted prolines, sodium salts of chiral 2-amino-2'-hydroxy-1,1'-binaphthyls.

The possibility of catalyzing the asymmetric Michael reaction has been discovered only in recent years.<sup>1–13</sup> According to the published data,<sup>1</sup> the most promising control of asymmetry in the reactions of conjugated addition involves the use of chiral catalysis, though most of the known catalysts are still difficultly available or are unstable. Effective heterobimetallic complexes of lanthanides<sup>2</sup> are strongly basic, often causing the formation of by-products. With neutral Ni<sup>II</sup> complexes,<sup>3</sup> low

chemical yields of the reaction products are attained, while novel chiral cationic Pd<sup>II</sup> complexes<sup>4</sup> do not ensure high stereoselectivity (<34% *ee*). With phase-transfer catalysts based on quaternary ammonium salts derived from cinchonidine<sup>5,6</sup> or proline,<sup>7</sup> high *ee* values are reached only for a narrow range of compounds involved in the Michael reaction. In the presence of bases, these ammonium salts decompose to give achiral products which also promote the reaction, thus decreas-

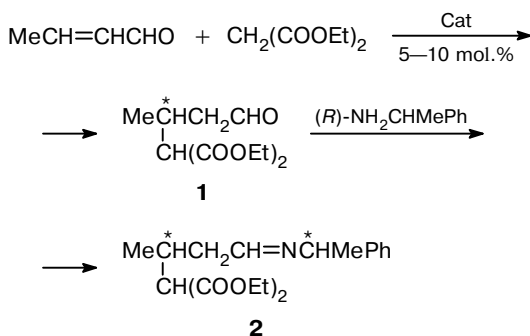
ing its enantioselectivity.<sup>8</sup> This limits the area of application of phase-transfer methods in catalytic asymmetric synthesis. Of topical interest is the search for new chiral phase-transfer catalysts of the formation of a C—C bond without the aforesaid disadvantages.

Earlier, we showed that the Michael reaction can be catalyzed by chiral amino alcohols,<sup>9</sup> chiral diol alcoholates, and amino alcoholates under phase-transfer conditions,<sup>10</sup> where the ability of a catalyst to chelate the alkali metal ion which forms an ion pair with the substrate carbanion is important.<sup>11</sup> (*S*)-Proline salts were also found to catalyze the Michael reaction.<sup>12,13</sup> In the present work, the influence of the structure of amino group-containing catalysts on the yield and enantioselectivity of the asymmetric Michael reaction of diethyl malonate with crotonaldehyde, as well as the influence of the nature of the alkali metal cation, temperature, solvent, and salt additives on the reaction outcome, are discussed.

### Results and Discussion

The Michael addition of diethyl malonate to crotonaldehyde shown in Scheme 1 yields ethyl 2-ethoxycarbonyl-3-methyl-5-oxopentanoate (**1**). Ester **1** was converted into diastereomeric Schiff bases (**2**) by the reaction with (*R*)-methylbenzylamine to determine its enantiomeric composition using <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy. The ratio obtained satisfactorily correlates with the optical rotation value of product **1**. The diastereomers were assigned according to the known procedure.<sup>12</sup>

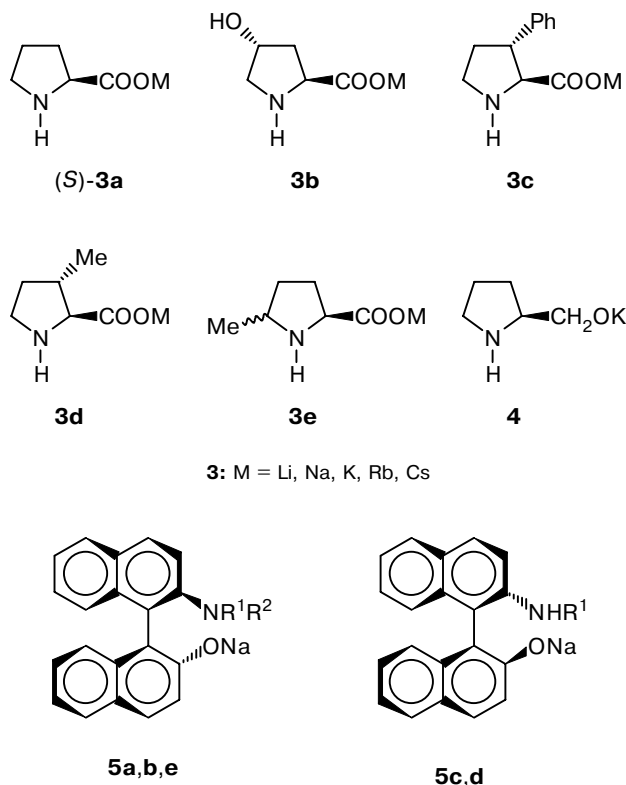
Scheme 1



The results of the addition (see Scheme 1) catalyzed by proline salts, its substituted analogs (**3a–e**), sodium or potassium derivatives of (*S*)-prolinol (**4**), and chiral *N*-substituted 2-amino-2'-hydroxy-1,1'-binaphthyls (**5a–e**, NOBINs) are presented in Table 1. Compound **1** is not formed without catalysts. The best results were obtained for catalysts **3a–e**. The reaction was carried out both under the conditions of phase-transfer catalysis with addition of solid alkali<sup>5–8,11</sup> and with preformed salts **3a–e** (see Refs. 12, 13). Both versions provide

similar results (see Table 1, entries 1 and 8). With (*S*)-proline, product (*S*)-**1** is formed (see Table 1, entries 1–7), while the use of (*R*)-proline affords, naturally, the enantiomer (*R*)-**1** (see entry 8). The reaction outcome is influenced by the nature of the alkali metal in salts **3a**. On passing from lithium to sodium and potassium, the reaction enantioselectivity is insignificantly enhanced (from 16 to 21%) (see entries 2, 3, 6–8), while the use of cesium decreases it by half (see entry 4). In contrast to the previous data,<sup>12</sup> the presence of rubidium reduces *ee* even more strongly (see entry 5). With an equimolar amount of 18-crown-6 together with potassium salt of (*S*)-**3a** (see entry 9), the asymmetric induction is reversed to give (*R*)-**1**.

It is known that the addition of copper salts to chelating systems sometimes enhances the enantioselectivity of the Michael reaction.<sup>14</sup> In our case, the addition of equimolar amount of copper salts to the catalyst increases *ee* in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (*cf.* entries 8 and 13) and decreases it in THF (*cf.* entries 10 and 12).



$R^1R^2 = \text{H}$  (NOBIN) (**a**), Me (**e**);  $R^1 = \text{H}$ ,  $R^2 = \text{Me}$  (**b**);  
 $R^1 = \text{cyclo-C}_6\text{H}_{11}$  (**c**), 1-adamantyl (**d**)

While studying the conditions for the use of aminocarboxylates **3**, we found that *ee* increases to 25% both with an increase in the amount of catalyst **3a** to 15 mol.% and with a decrease in temperature to  $-10^\circ\text{C}$  (see entries 7 and 6, respectively). A similar effect (an increase in *ee* to 32–38%) is observed in solvating solvents such as Et<sub>2</sub>O, Bu<sub>2</sub>O, and THF (see entries 10

**Table 1.** The Michael reaction of diethyl malonate with crotonaldehyde in the presence of catalysts **3a–e**, **4**, and **5a–e** at 18 °C

Entry	Catalyst	Salt cation or base	Solvent	Time /h	Yield of <b>1</b> (%)	<i>ee</i> of <b>1</b> (%) <sup>a</sup>
1	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	K <sup>b</sup>	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	12	70	19( <i>S</i> )
2	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	Na	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	72	90	20( <i>S</i> )
3	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	Li	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	72	90	16( <i>S</i> )
4	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	Cs	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	90	60	10( <i>S</i> ) <sup>c</sup>
5	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	Rb	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	24	50	7( <i>S</i> )
6 <sup>d</sup>	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	72	60	25( <i>S</i> )
7	15% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	72	60	24.5( <i>S</i> )
8	5% ( <i>R</i> )- <b>3a</b>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	72	90	21( <i>R</i> )
9	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b> , 10% 18-краун-6	K	THF	70	15	25( <i>R</i> )
10	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	K	THF	24	65	38( <i>S</i> )
11	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b>	K	Et <sub>2</sub> O <sup>e</sup>	24	80	32( <i>S</i> )
12	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b> , CuI	K	THF	70	70	30( <i>S</i> )
13	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3a</b> , CuI <sup>f</sup>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	24	90	32( <i>S</i> )
14	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3b</b>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	72	58	6( <i>S</i> )
15	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3c</b>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	18	78	27( <i>S</i> )
16	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3d</b>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	24	70	25( <i>S</i> )
17	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3e</b>	K	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	18	90	12( <i>R</i> ) <sup>c</sup>
18	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3c</b>	K <sup>g</sup>	Et <sub>2</sub> O	24	80	8( <i>S</i> )
19 <sup>d</sup>	5% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3c</b>	Rb	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	70	80	1.5( <i>S</i> ) <sup>c</sup>
20	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3c</b>	K	THF	70	80	28( <i>S</i> )
21	10% ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3c</b> , CuI	K	Et <sub>2</sub> O	24	60	40( <i>S</i> )
22	10% <b>4</b>	—	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	168	40	8( <i>S</i> )
23	10% <b>4</b> <sup>h</sup>	10% Bu <sup>t</sup> OK	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	80	15	22( <i>S</i> )
24	5% <b>5a</b>	5% NaH	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub> <sup>j</sup>	48	95	5.5( <i>R</i> )
25	5% <b>5b</b>	5% NaH	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub> <sup>j</sup>	48	85	1.5( <i>R</i> )
26	5% <b>5c</b>	5% NaH	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub> <sup>j</sup>	48	95	8.5( <i>S</i> )
27	5% <b>5d</b>	5% NaH	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub> <sup>j</sup>	48	95	3( <i>S</i> )
28	5% <b>5e</b>	5% NaH	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub> <sup>j</sup>	48	98	0

<sup>a</sup> Determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy.<sup>b</sup> Phase-transfer conditions: the catalyst (5%), KOH (solid), and CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>.<sup>c</sup> Determined from the optical rotation value.<sup>d</sup> At –10 °C.<sup>e</sup> The use of Bu<sub>2</sub><sup>n</sup>O does not change *ee*.<sup>f</sup> The use of CuCN or CuBr does not change *ee*.<sup>g</sup> Special conditions of drying the catalyst and the reagents; the reaction was carried out in the presence of 4 Å molecular sieves.<sup>h</sup> The use of an additional equimolar amount of CuI increased the yield to 50%, *ee* remaining unchanged.<sup>j</sup> The use of THF and ether does not change *ee*, while the yield decreases.

and *1l*). The influence of the substituents in the pyrrolidine ring on the stereoselectivity of the process was studied for potassium salts of substituted prolines **3b–e**. The stereoselectivity was found to decrease for (2*S*,4*R*)-4-hydroxyproline (**3b**) (see entry 14) and to increase from 21 to 27% (compared to **3a**) for (2*S*,3*R*)-3-phenylproline (**3c**) (see entry 15) and for (2*S*,3*S*)-3-methylproline (**3d**) (see entry 16). (2*S*)-5-Methylproline **3e** was used as a mixture of *cis* and *trans* isomers (see entry 17) to give an (*R*)-product, *i.e.*, the stereoselectivity is reversed.

Virtually complete removal of traces of water from the reaction medium, variations of the reaction time and temperature, change of a solvent, and the use of other bases for salt formation do not increase the degree

of asymmetric induction (see entries 18–20). The best *ee* value (40%) was obtained with potassium salt of (2*S*,3*R*)-phenylproline **3c** with addition of CuI in ether (see entry 21).

As was determined by us earlier,<sup>9</sup> amino alcohol **4** catalyzes the Michael reaction of crotonaldehyde with methyl nitroacetate, but its enantioselectivity is low in the case of diethyl malonate (see entry 22). The use of potassium alcoholate **4** increases *ee* to 22% (see entry 23). Na-phenolate of (*S*)-(+)-NOBIN<sup>11b</sup> **5a** also provides high chemical yields, but with low *ee* values (see entry 24). With NOBINS **5b–e**, the degree of asymmetric induction changes only slightly; (*R*)-catalyst favors the formation of (*S*)-**1** and *vice versa* (see entries 25–27). (*S*)-*N,N*-Dimethyl-NOBIN **5e** gives race-

mate **1** in almost quantitative yield (see entry 28). It should be noted that the previously used catalysts, including phase-transfer ones, afforded racemate **1** only in 12–36% yields.<sup>15–17</sup>

Asymmetric aldol condensation catalyzed by (*S*)-proline is traditionally believed to follow the mechanism involving intermediate immonium salts.<sup>18</sup> The formation of such salts involving the carbonyl group of the acceptor, which enable the asymmetric induction in the addition of a donor, also occurs in the reactions of *Z*-enones with aliphatic nitro compounds and derivatives of diethyl malonate catalyzed by (*S*)-proline salts.<sup>12</sup> Apparently, the catalysis by amino compounds **3–5** can follow the same mechanism. However, in contrast to data from Ref. 12, the optical yield of product **1** was found to increase in solvating solvents and depend in a more complex way on the apparent cation size. In addition, *N,N*-dimethyl-NOBIN **5e**, which cannot form immonium salts, under conditions used by us catalyzes the nonstereoselective formation of the product in high yield. This indicates that the true mechanism is more complicated than that described earlier.<sup>12,13</sup> The chiral catalyst may function as a base, as was assumed for the Michael reaction with methyl methacrylate<sup>10</sup> catalyzed by amino alcoholates. The chelation of the alkali metal ion<sup>10,11</sup> or copper ion<sup>14,19</sup> by bidentate catalysts **3–5** can give the known type of intermediate,<sup>14</sup> which not only forms an ion pair with the substrate carbanion<sup>11</sup> and activates enal,<sup>14</sup> but also can be a stereodiscriminator of the addition.

Thus, among the catalysts studied, amino carboxylates **3a–e** are the most efficient catalysts of the Michael reaction of diethyl malonate with crotonaldehyde to give the target product in high chemical yields (up to 90%) and asymmetric induction up to 40%. These results correlate with average *ee* values, which do not exceed 20–50% in the Michael reaction with acyclic substrates.<sup>7,10,12,13</sup> The reactions of crotonaldehyde with diethyl malonate, like the previously studied reaction with methyl nitroacetate,<sup>9</sup> is of interest because of the possibility of using the product obtained<sup>20</sup> for the synthesis of difficultly accessible 3-methylproline and its derivatives with high *ee*.<sup>21,22</sup>

### Experimental

<sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra were recorded on Bruker 200 and Bruker 400 instruments. Optical rotation was measured on a Perkin–Elmer 241 polarimeter. CHCl<sub>3</sub> and CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> were distilled over P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> (water content ≤0.01% according to the Fischer method); THF and ethers were distilled over LiAlH<sub>4</sub>. Granulated NaOH and KOH (Reakhim), CsOH·2H<sub>2</sub>O, and 50% aqueous RbOH (Aldrich) were used.

(*S*)-Proline **3a** and (*2S,4R*)-4-hydroxyproline **3b** (Aldrich) were used. (*2S,3R*)-3-Phenylproline **3c**, (*2S,3S*)-3-methylproline **3d**, and (*2S*)-5-methylproline **3e** (*cis/trans* = 1/1) were prepared as described in Ref. 24. Amino carboxylates **3a–e** were synthesized by adding an equivalent of the corresponding metal hydroxide in aqueous ethanol with subsequent removal of the

solvent according to the known procedure.<sup>12</sup> (*S*)-Proline **4** was obtained by the reduction of (*S*)-proline.<sup>9</sup> (*S*)-(+)-2-Amino-2'-hydroxy-1,1'-binaphthyl (NOBIN, **5a**) and its *N*-derivatives were prepared according to the published procedure.<sup>23</sup> Sodium and potassium derivatives were obtained *in situ* by the reactions of amino alcohol **4** and amino phenols **5a–e** (M = H) with an equimolar amount of a base (NaH or Bu<sup>t</sup>OK) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> immediately before use according to the known procedure.<sup>11</sup>

**The Michael addition of diethyl malonate to crotonaldehyde (general procedure).** A mixture of diethyl malonate (2.72 g, 17 mmol) and crotonaldehyde (1.19 g, 17 mmol) in 10 mL of CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> was stirred with a salt of (*S*)-proline **3a** (1.7 mmol) at 18 °C for 18 h. After 2*M* HCl was added, the products were extracted twice with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>. The combined extracts were washed with water, dried with MgSO<sub>4</sub>, filtered, concentrated, passed through a layer of silica gel (3–5 cm), and concentrated. The resulting mixture was analyzed by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy in the presence of a certain amount of AcOH to determine the yield of compound (*S*)-**1**. The product was additionally purified by preparative TLC on silica gel in hexane–ethyl acetate (3 : 1).<sup>15–17</sup> Found (%): C, 56.94; H, 7.83. C<sub>11</sub>H<sub>18</sub>O<sub>5</sub>. Calculated (%): C, 57.39; H, 7.88. For (*S*)-**1** [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>20</sup> +5.5 (*c* 0.66, CHCl<sub>3</sub>), *ee* 25% (*S*) was determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy for diastereomeric derivatives (see below). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>),  $\delta$ : 1.05 (d, 3 H, MeCH, *J* = 6.8 Hz); 1.25 (t, 6 H, 2 Me, *J* = 7.0 Hz); 2.60 (m, 3 H, CHCH<sub>2</sub>); 3.34 (d, 1 H, CH(COOR)<sub>2</sub>, *J* = 6.8 Hz); 4.18 (q, 4 H, 2 CH<sub>2</sub>, *J* = 7.0 Hz); 9.75 (dd, 1 H, CH, *J* = 1.7 and 0.9 Hz). The literature data<sup>15–17</sup> for ethyl 2-ethoxycarbonyl-3-methyl-5-oxopentanoate **1**: b.p. 105 °C (0.5 Torr). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>),  $\delta$ : 1.08 (d, 3 H, Me, *J* = 6.8 Hz); 1.29 (t, 6 H, *J* = 7.0 Hz); 2.77 (m, 3 H); 3.42 (d, 1 H, *J* = 6.8 Hz); 4.23 (q, 4 H, *J* = 7.0 Hz); 9.8 (dd, 1 H, *J* = 1.7 and 0.9 Hz).

Diastereomeric Schiff bases (**2**) were synthesized from equimolar amounts of compound **1** and (*R*)-methylbenzylamine by mixing them in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> with addition of an excess of MgSO<sub>4</sub>. After one day, filtration followed by concentration gave compound **2** in >90% yield as a mixture of (*S,R*)- and (*R,R*)-diastereomers. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>),  $\delta$ : 0.95, 1.00 (both d, 3 H, MeCH, *J* = 6.8 Hz); 1.18, 1.23 (both t, 6 H, 2 Me, *J* = 7.0 Hz); 1.42 (d, 3 H, MeCH(Ph), *J* = 6.4 Hz); 2.12–2.63 (m, 3 H, CHCH<sub>2</sub>); 3.28 (d, 1 H, CH(COOR)<sub>2</sub>, *J* = 7.6 Hz); 4.08–4.15 (m, 5 H, 2 (CH<sub>2</sub>) + MeCH(Ph)); 7.1–7.3 (m, 5 H, Ph); 7.6 (s, 1 H, CH=). The diastereomeric excess for compounds **2** was determined as a difference between the intensities of signals for the MeCH(CHR)CH<sub>2</sub> fragment in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra at  $\delta$  0.95 and 1.00, corresponding to (*S,R*)- and (*R,R*)-diastereomers. The *ee* values of **3a** for a series of repeated experiments was reproduced with an accuracy of 1% (relative).

This work was financially supported by the INCO-Copernicus European Foundation (Grant No. IC15-CT96-0722), the International Scientific and Technical Center (ISTC 2000, Grant No. A-356), the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (Project No. 99-03-32970), the Agency of the Czech Republic (Grant No. 203/00/0601), and the Agency of Charles University (Grant No. 18/98).

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*Received November 16, 2000;  
in revised form April 24, 2001*