SYNLETT
Spotlight 477

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

Molybdenum(VI) Dichloride Dioxide

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Introduction

Although molybdenum(VI) dichloride dioxide (MoO$_2$Cl$_2$) has been known for a long time,$^1$ it is still exploited as a catalyst for versatile organic transformations.$^2$ It is an oxo-transfer catalyst, displaying its ability to promote oxidation as well as reduction reactions. In many reactions, it is also used as a Lewis acid.

Abstracts

(A) Using catalytic MoO$_2$Cl$_2$(dmf)$_2$, arylindazoles are accessible by reductive cyclisation of ortho-nitrobenzylidene amines with triphenylphosphine in refluxing toluene or under microwave conditions. Similarly, ortho-nitrostyrenes and nitrobiphenyls gave indoles and carbazoles, respectively. Benzotiazines, benzoxazines, and tetrahydroquinolines were obtained by the reductive cyclisation of ortho-nitroalkenes via an Alder-ene reaction.$^6$

(B) Selective deoxygenation of sulfoxides to sulfides was carried out with triphenylphosphate or boranes using MoO$_2$Cl$_2$(dmf)$_2$ or MoO$_2$Cl$_2$. Catalytic MoO$_2$Cl$_2$(dmf)$_2$ and pinacol as a benign reducing agent were used for the reduction of sulfoxides to sulfides. The same system was explored for the reduction of nitroaromatic compounds to anilines.$^5,7$

(C) Aromatic and aliphatic esters were reduced to alcohols using silanes and catalytic MoO$_2$Cl$_2$. Imines were efficiently reduced to amines using the same system.$^8$

(D) Using MoO$_2$Cl$_2$, dimethylphenylsilanes were added to aldehydes and ketones to give dimethylphenylsilyl ethers.$^9$

Preparation

MoO$_2$Cl$_2$ is a pale-yellow solid, highly reactive and corrosive. It is commercially available$^3$ and can be prepared by a method reported by Colton and Tomkins.$^4$ MoO$_2$Cl$_2$L$_2$ (where L = dmf, dmso, and thf) are more frequently used because of their thermal and chemical stability. The preparation of MoO$_2$Cl$_2$(dmf)$_2$ is simple, efficient, and almost quantitative using readily available Na$_2$MoO$_4$·2H$_2$O.$^5$

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(E) MoO2Cl2(dmso)2 is a mild oxidation catalyst and oxidizes primary benzylic alcohols to aldehydes and secondary alcohols to ketones using oxygen.10

(F) Sulfides were selectively oxidized to sulfoxides and sulfones using MoO2Cl2(dmf)2 as a catalyst and hydrogen peroxide in varying concentrations. Similarly, aliphatic and aromatic thiols were oxidized to disulfides.11

(G) Epoxidation of various internal and terminal alkenes was achieved with high selectivity and good yields using an oxo-Mo catalyst. Optically active substrates were also explored with retention of configuration.14

(H) Thioglycosylation of O-acetylated glycosides with functionalized thiols led to exclusive 1,2-thioglycoside diastereomers using catalytic MoO2Cl2 catalyst. Acetylation, pivalation, and benzoylation of alcohols, amines, and thiols was achieved by nucleophilic acyl substitution using amphoteric MoO2Cl2 catalyst.13

(I) Carbamates were prepared from primary, secondary, or tertiary alcohols and aliphatic or aromatic isocyanates using low concentrations of MoO2Cl2(dmf)2 catalyst. Optically active substrates were also explored with retention of configuration.14

(J) Methanolysis of epoxides to α-alkoxy alcohols is carried out by MoO2Cl2-catalyzed condensation of ethyl diazoacetate and aldehydes. Acetylation, pivalation, and benzoylation of alcohols, amines, and thiols was achieved by nucleophilic acyl substitution using amphoteric MoO2Cl2 catalyst.13

References

(3) CAS No. 13637-68-8.