Deuterium Labelling of L-Tyrosine with Raney Alloys in Alkaline Deuterium Oxide Solutions

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https://doi.org/10.15017/7875
Deuterium Labelling of L-Tyrosine with Raney Alloys in Alkaline Deuterium Oxide Solutions

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The synthesis of deuteriated L-tyrosines with Raney alloys in alkaline deuterium oxide solutions, involving reductive debromination of brominated L-tyrosines and hydrogen-deuterium (H-D) exchange of L-tyrosines, without causing racemization, is presented.

Introduction

We have previously reported that a heterogeneous catalytic system utilizing a Raney alloy in alkaline deuterium oxide solution provides a versatile procedure for synthesizing compounds labelled with deuterium(s).1a-e L-Tyrosine is widely known as an essential amino acid and is found as an important metabolic intermediate in many kinds of phenyl propanoids. Deuterated L-tyrosines have attracted much attention in biological studies, and several syntheses have already been published.2) In the present study, we have applied the methodology mentioned above towards deuterium labelling of L-tyrosines focusing mainly on the hydrogen-deuterium (H-D) exchange as a key reaction, and the results are herein described.

Results and Discussions

At the outset, the direct purification of deuteriated products from an aqueous reaction mixture which was obtained by the treatment of brominated L-tyrosines with a copper-aluminum (Cu-Al) alloy was found to be extremely difficult, due to the slightly soluble nature of L-tyrosine in both water and any organic solvents. Furthermore, Al(OH)₃, which was generated on neutralization of the reaction mixtures, hampered the purification. We attempted to isolate deuteriated L-tyrosines as their derivatives which are soluble in an organic solvent. Finally, we arrived at the somewhat tedious procedure whereby the deuteriated L-tyrosines were isolated as their tosylate in a two-step sequence by in situ N-Boc-protected-deprotected reaction and subsequent esterification with methyl p-toluensulfonate in neutral media.3b

In preference to deuteriation, the deuterium replacement of the mobile hydrogens in L-tyrosine by employment of a small amount of D₂O under sonication was effective to

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Scheme 1 Reagents and conditions:} & \quad i, \text{Cu-Al alloy,} \\
& 10\% \text{NaOD-D}_2\text{O, 40 °C for } 1\text{ h} \\
& ii, t\text{-Boc, } n\text{-BuOH, r.t.,} \\
& 12\text{ h} \\
& iii, \text{TosOMe, MeOH, reflux, } 10\text{ h}
\end{align*}
\]

Table 1 Reductive debromination of brominated L-tyrosines (1a-b) using Cu-Al alloy in 10% NaOD-D₂O at 40 °C for 1 h

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Run</th>
<th>Substrate</th>
<th>Y. (%)a</th>
<th>D-content (%)b</th>
<th>e.e. (%)c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIsolated yields shown; bDeuterium content determined by ¹H NMR; c.e.e. determined by HPLC.

Received October 3, 1997
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The Reports of Institute of Advanced Material Study, Kyushu University Vol. 11, No. 2, 1997
The optical purities of 2c-e, which were determined with HPLC, were expressed in d.e. (%), since deuteriums were incorporated into also the α-positions. The deuterium content of deuteriated L-tyrosines (2c-e) was highly dependent upon the kind of Raney alloy and alkaline solution used. When 3 was treated with the Co-Al alloy in 20% Na₂CO₃-D₂O at 90 ºC for 2 h, 41% deuterium was surprisingly incorporated at the o-position to the hydroxyl group in addition to the benzylic position (run 1). The use of a Ni-Al alloy brought about high deuterium incorporation into both the 3,5- and benzylic positions. It is noteworthy that the racemization at the β-carbon did not occur even though 57% of the methane proton in 3 was replaced with deuterium (run 2). The best results were obtained under the more demanding conditions when L-tyrosine (3) was treated with the Ni-Al alloy in the presence of 10% NaOD-D₂O; the deuterium content at the β-position amounted to 91% and that at the o-position of the hydroxyl group and at the benzyl position 92 and 93%, respectively, in 85% optical purity (run 3). The lowering of the optical purity as compared to runs 1-2 was foreseen to some extent since the use of a strong base such as NaOD-D₂O solution is expected to cause racemization as a result of enolization.

The ready deuterium incorporation into the 3,5-positions in 3 might be explained by the fact that the introduction of a polar hydroxyl group causes much stronger adsorption of the aromatic ring on the active catalyst surface, thereby favoring H-D exchange. Indeed, as shown in Fig. 2 and Table 3, treatment of L-phenylalanine (4a) with a Co-Al alloy in 20% Na₂CO₃-D₂O at 90 ºC leads to exchange only at the benzylic and β-positions (83 and 32% respectively); no deuteriums were incorporated in the aromatic ring. These results are consistent with previous findings on 4-methoxybenzyl alcohol.16

The deuterium content of the products was determined by using ¹H NMR spectroscopy. It should be noted that pronounced racemization did not occur and no additional deuterium incorporation was observed under the above reaction conditions.

It has recently been demonstrated that benzyl hydrogen deuteriums are susceptible to H-D exchange when using a cobalt-aluminum (Co-Al) alloy in 20% Na₂CO₃-D₂O, affording the [α,α'-H] compounds in high deuterium contents and in favorable yields.10 In addition, it was found that some H-D exchange of optically active benzyl hydrogen proceeds with complete retention of stereochemistry.10 We subsequently turned our attention to deuterium labelling of L-tyrosine (3) by means of the H-D exchange technique in order to explore the feasibility of this approach toward amino acids bearing an aromatic ring.

The H-D exchange reactions of L-tyrosine (3) were performed with Raney alloys, such as nickel-aluminum (Ni-Al) and Co-Al alloys, in alkaline deuterium oxide and the results are summarized (Fig. 1 and Table 2).

![Fig. 1](image-url)

**Table 2**  H-D exchange reaction of L-tyrosine (3) in alkaline D₂O at 90 ºC for 2 h

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Run¹</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Y.(%)ᵇ</th>
<th>D-content (%)ˢ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>α:79; β:13; 2.6-Ph: 6; 3.5-Ph:41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>α:97; β:57; 2.6-Ph: 2; 3.5-Ph:94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2e</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>α:93; β:91; 2.6-Ph:13; 3.5-Ph:92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Run 1: Co-Al alloy, 20% Na₂CO₃-D₂O, d.e.> 99%; run 2: Ni-Al alloy, 20% Na₂CO₃-D₂O, d.e.> 99%; run 3: Ni-Al alloy, 10% NaOD-D₂O, d.e. > 85%; ˢIsolated yields shown; ˢDeuterium content determined by ¹H NMR.

![Fig. 2](image-url)

**Table 3**  H-D exchange reaction of L-phenylalanes (4a-e) in 20% Na₂CO₃-D₂O for 2 h

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Run²</th>
<th>Substrate</th>
<th>Y.(%)ᵇ</th>
<th>D-content (%)ˢ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4a</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>α: 83; β: 32 Ph: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>α: 60; β: 0 Ph: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>α: 0; β: 0 Ph: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²Run 1: Co-Al alloy, 90 ºC; run 2: Ni-Al alloy, 60 ºC; run 3: Ni-Al alloy, 60 ºC; ˢIsolated yields shown; ˢDeuterium content determined by ¹H NMR; ˢUnder ultrasound irradiation.

In the studies of the H-D exchange of N-formyl- and -Boc-protected phenylalanines (4b-e), which was designed...
to assess the steric factor, no deuterium exchange occurred at the both β-positions. Hence, it is strongly suggested that both a hydroxyl and amino group are essential if extensive H-D exchange is to occur.

The site(s) of deuterium incorporation can be determined directly by using 2H NMR spectroscopy as well as indirectly by 1H NMR spectroscopy. For example, in the 2H NMR spectrum of 2b the deuterium signals were observed as a singlet at 6.89 ppm and in that of 2e as singlets at 6.87, 4.28, and 3.08 ppm in an approximately 2:1:2 intensity ratios, respectively. Furthermore, in the 13C NMR spectrum of 2b the deuterium-bound C(2) was observed as a triplet of J 22.9 Hz at 115.15 ppm. The 13C NMR spectrum of 2e showed a triplet of J 21.8 Hz at 115.16 ppm, a triplet of J 20.0 Hz at 53.26 ppm, and a quintet of J 20.0 Hz at 34.43 ppm, which are assigned as the C(3), C(β), and C(α), respectively. These results clearly show that deuterium atoms were situated in the appropriate positions of these compounds.

### Experimental

All melting points were determined by a Yanagimoto micro-apparatus and are uncorrected. IR spectra were recorded as KBr pellets on a Jasco IR-700 spectrophotometer. 1H NMR spectra were measured on a JEOL EX-270 and JEOL GX500 NMR spectrometers at 270 MHz and 500 MHz using MeSi as an internal standard. Chemical shift values are expressed in δ (ppm) downfield from MeSi and coupling constants are in Hz. 13C(1)H NMR spectra were recorded on a JEOL GX500 NMR spectrometer at 125.65 MHz by setting dimethyl sulfoxide-d6 signal to 39.5 ppm as a standard. 2H NMR spectra were recorded with a JEOL EX-270 NMR spectrometer at 41.34 MHz by setting dimethyl sulfoxide-d6 signal to 2.30 ppm as a reference. Mass spectra were taken on a JEOL JMS OISG-2 mass spectrometer at 75 eV in a direct inlet system. A Transonic T460 ultrasonic laboratory cleaner (35 kHz, 68 W, Elma Inc.) was used in sonication procedures. The optical purities of 2ewere determined with a Shimadzu HPLC LC-6A using a SUGAMICIRAL-OA-5000 column (4.6 mm I.D. x 15 cm) in a mobile phase, 1 mM CuSO4 in a solution of water and methanol (85:15/v/v).

**Materials.**—Deuterium oxide (D2O, 99.9 atom%) and 40% NaOD-D2O (99.5 atom%) were purchased from ISOTEC Inc. Ni-Al (Ni-Al: 50:50 w%), Co-Al (Co-Al: 50:50 w%) and Cu-Al (Cu-Al: 50:50 w%) alloys were available from Kishida Chemical Co., Ltd. 3-Bromo-D-lytrosine (1a) was prepared in the same way as 3-bromo-D,L-lytrosine.49 3,5-Dibromo-L-lytrosine (1b) was purchased from Sigma Chemical Company and was used without further purification.

3-Bromo-L-lytrosine (1a): 30%, colourless needles (H2O), mp 242-244°C; νmax/cm-1 (KBr) 3242, 1595, 1436, 1327, 1232, 1038, 835, 748; δH (D2O, 270 MHz) 7.30 (d, 1H, J 2.3 Hz), 6.94 (dd, 1H, J 8.3, 2.3 Hz), 6.64 (d, 1H, J 8.3 Hz), 3.41-3.31 (m, 1H), 2.94-2.62 (m, 2H); m/z 261 (M+, 16), 259 (M+, 25), 246 (37), 244 (57), 215 (90), 213 (100); Found: C, 41.38; H, 4.11; N, 5.15. C11H14O2NBr requires C, 41.56; H, 3.89; N 5.39.

**General procedure for the H-D exchange method.—** A mixture of L-tyrosine (3) (544 mg, 3.0 mmol) and D2O (1.0 ml) was stirred for 5 min under ultrasound irradiation, then was evaporated in vacuo. To a mixture of the deuteron-displaced 3 in 10% Na2CO3-D2O (12.0 ml) was gradually added Ni-Al alloy (800 mg) over a period of 20 min at 90°C and the mixture was then stirred at the same temperature for 2 h. After it was cooled to room temperature, the mixture was filtered off using a celite as aid and the inorganics were washed with a small amount of 10% aqueous Na2CO3. To the washings, which were combined with the filtrate, was added deuterobutyl dicarbonate (756 mg, 3.3 mmol) and tert-butanol (10.0 ml), and the mixture was then stirred at room temperature for 12 h. The resulting suspension was carefully adjusted to pH 5 with concentrated HCl under ice-cooling and was saturated with brine. The whole mixture was extracted with n-butanol (30 ml x 3) and the extracts dried over MgSO4 before being evaporated in vacuo to leave a residue, which was allowed to dry by further heating on a vacuum pump to yield L-[3,5,α,α,β,β-2H3]tyrosine (266 mg, 49%), as colourless needles (1% aqueous HCl), mp 277-278.5°C (dec.); (lit.50 mp 280-285°C as for H2 form); νmax/cm-1 (KBr) 3206, 2076, 1604, 1475, 1402, 1354, 1248, 840, 767. In a separate experiment, a mixture of L-[3,5,α,α,β,β-2H3]tyrosine (90 mg, 0.48 mmol) and methyl p-toluenesulfonate (186 mg, 1.0 mmol) in dry methyl alcohol (2.0 ml) was refluxed for 10 h. After the reaction mixture had been cooled to room temperature, it was evaporated in vacuo to leave a residue. To it was added ether to generate a precipitate which was collected by filtration to afford L-[3,5,α,α,β,β-2H3]tyrosine methyl ester p-toluenesulfonate salt (2d) (167 mg, 92%, overall 45% from 3) as colourless needles without further purification, mp 214.5-216.5°C (lit.47 mp 210-210.5°C as for H2 form); νmax/cm-1 (KBr) 3334, 3062, 1745, 1603, 1535, 1322, 1190, 1033, 1099, 820, 685, δH (dimethyl sulfoxide-d6, 270 MHz) 9.38 (s, 1H), 8.31 (s, 3H), 7.48 (d, 2H, J 7.9 Hz), 7.11 (d, 2H, J 7.9 Hz), 6.99 (s, 2H), 6.71 (d, weak, J 8.9 Hz), 4.22 (s, weak), 3.69 (s, 3H), 2.95 (d, weak, J 11.2 Hz), 2.29 (s, 3H); δC (dimethyl sulfoxide-d6) 169.40, 156.58, 145.17, 137.97, 130.22, 128.14, 125.48, 124.12, 115.16 (t, J 21.8 Hz), 53.26 (t, J 20.0 Hz), 52.54, 34.43 (quint, J 20.0 Hz), 20.75; δH 6.87 (2D, s), 4.28 (1D, s), 3.08 (2D, s).

**General procedure for the reductive debromination method.**—To a stirred mixture of the deuteron-displaced 3,5-dibromo-L-lytrosine (1b) (1.02 g, 3.0 mmol) in 10% NaOD-D2O (12.0 ml) which was prepared from 40% NaOD-D2O (3.0 ml) and D2O (9.0 ml) was gradually added Cu-Al alloy (500 mg) at room temperature over a period of 15 min and the mixture was then stirred at 40°C for 1 h. After cooling to room temperature, it was treated in a similar manner to that described above to afford L-[3,5-
\( ^2 \text{H}_2 \)tynosine (188 mg, 34%), mp 275.5-276.5 °C (lit.\(^5\),
mp 280-285°C); \( \nu_{\text{max}}/\text{cm}^{-1} (\text{KBr}) 3204, 2080, 1607, 1476,
1433, 1363, 1330, 1246, 1044, 912, 767, 552. In a separate experi-
ment, L-[3,5-\( ^2 \text{H}_2 \)tynosine (90 mg, 0.49 mmol) was con-
verted into the corresponding p-
toluenesulfonate salt (2b) (164 mg, 86%, overall 29% from 1 b) as colourless needles without further purification,
mp 215.5-218.0 °C (lit.\(^6\) mp 210-210.5 °C as for \( ^2 \text{H}_0 
\) form); \( \nu_{\text{max}}/\text{cm}^{-1} 3336, 3044, 1746, 1586, 1537, 1481,
1436, 1257, 1185, 1126, 1034, 1009, 820, 686, 570; \( \delta_\text{H} 
\) (dimethyl sulfoxide-d\(_6\)) 9.37 (s, 1H), 8.37 (s,
3H), 7.53 (d, 2H, J 7.7 Hz), 7.14 (d, 2H, J 7.7 Hz), 6.99 (s,
2H), 6.72 (d, weak, J 6.8 Hz), 4.19 (s, 1H), 3.66 (s, 3H),
3.03-2.93 (m, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H); \( \delta_\text{C} \) (dimethyl sulfoxide-
d\(_6\)) 169.40, 156.57, 145.10, 138.01, 130.23, 128.14,
125.46, 124.20, 115.15 (t, \( J 22.9 \) Hz), 53.51, 52.53,
35.20, 20.74; \( \delta_\text{H} \) 6.89 (2D, s).

Partial financial support from Tohwa University is gratefully acknowledged.

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