Bismuth(III) Oxide Perchlorate Promoted Rearrangement of Epoxides to Aldehydes and Ketones

Ram S. Mohan, Illinois Wesleyan University
Andrew M. Anderson
Jesse M. Blazek
Parie Garg
Brian J. Payne

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/ram_mohan/18/
Bismuth(III) Oxide Perchlorate Promoted Rearrangement of Epoxides to Aldehydes and Ketones

Andrew M. Anderson, Jesse M. Blazek, Parie Garg, Brian J. Payne and Ram S. Mohan

Abstract
Aryl-substituted epoxides and aliphatic epoxides with a tertiary epoxide carbon undergo smooth rearrangement in the presence of 10–50 mol% bismuth(III) oxide perchlorate, BiOClO₄·xH₂O, to give carbonyl compounds. The rearrangement is regioselective with aryl substituted epoxides and a single carbonyl compound arising from cleavage of benzylic C–O bond is formed. BiOClO₄·xH₂O is relatively non-toxic, insensitive to air and inexpensive, making this catalyst an attractive alternative to more corrosive and toxic Lewis acids such as BF₃·Et₂O or InCl₃ currently used to effect epoxide rearrangements.

Keywords: bismuth, bismuth compounds, epoxides, rearrangements.

Epoxides are one of the most versatile functional groups in organic chemistry due to their ready availability and ease of transformation into a wide variety of functional groups.¹ The rearrangement of epoxides to carbonyl compounds is a useful synthetic transformation and several reagents have been utilized for this purpose. Some examples include BF₃·Et₂O,² a lithium salts,² b MgBr₂,² a and more recently, Pd(OAc)₂ in the presence of a phosphine ligand² c and InCl₃.² d The constitution of the rearrangement product is determined by the identity of the Lewis acid, the migratory aptitude of the epoxide substituents, and the solvent (Scheme 1).

Despite a number of methods that have been developed for this rearrangement, only a few are both regioselective and catalytic in nature. For example, BF₃·Et₂O and MgBr₂ are typically used in stoichiometric or excess amounts.² a In addition, many of these reagents have some drawbacks. Boron trifluoride etherate is corrosive and air-sensitive while indium chloride is highly toxic and very expensive. The rearrangements promoted by these reagents also require anhydrous conditions. With increasing environmental concerns, it is imperative that new ‘environment friendly’ reagents be developed.³ Recently, bismuth compounds have become attractive candidates for use as reagents in organic synthesis for several reasons. Most bismuth compounds are relatively non-toxic, readily available at low cost and are fairly insensitive to small amounts of water.⁴ Bismuth has an electron configuration of...
Lewis acid...R\(\rightarrow\)H

Scheme 1.

\([\text{Xe}]^4f^{14}5d^{10}6s^26p^3\). Due to the weak shielding of the 4f electrons (Lanthanide contraction), bismuth(III) compounds exhibit Lewis acidity. The Lewis acidity of bismuth(III) chloride and bismuth triflate have been recently exploited in organic synthesis. They are catalysts for Diels–Alder,\(^5\) Michael\(^6\) and aldol reactions.\(^7\) We wish to report that BiOClO\(_4\)·H\(_2\)O is a very efficient reagent for rearrangement of epoxides to carbonyl compounds (Eq. (1), Table 1).

BiOClO\(_4\)·H\(_2\)O is commercially available and requires no special handling.\(^8\) Use of an inert atmosphere is not required unless the product is particularly air sensitive (entries 5–7). The reagent is insoluble in common organic solvents and is used as a suspension. For most epoxides, the best yields were obtained with use of 20 mol% reagent though stilbene oxides (entries 1–4) underwent smooth rearrangement with as little as 10 mol% reagent. Dichloromethane was found to be the best solvent for the rearrangement. The rearrangement was very slow in tetrahydrofuran and benzene while no rearrangement was observed when diethyl ether was used as the solvent.

Rearrangement of stilbene oxides (entries 1–4) gave only the diphenylacetaldehydes. Thus, this procedure is a good example of an epoxide rearrangement method that is both catalytic and regioselective in nature. These cases gave very clean products, and further purification was deemed unnecessary. In all cases, the phenyl group was found to migrate in preference to hydrogen. Thus, rearrangement of both cis- and trans-stilbene oxides (entries 1 and 2) gave diphenylacetaldehyde as the only product. In contrast, the rearrangement of trans-stilbene oxide by MgBr\(_2\) in benzene gave a 3:1 mixture of diphenylacetaldehyde (phenyl migration) and deoxybenzoin (hydrogen migration).\(^2c\) With BF\(_3\)·Et\(_2\)O, trans-stilbene oxide gives only diphenylacetaldehyde while the cis isomer gives a mixture of both diphenylacetaldehyde and deoxybenzoin. It was found that hydrogen migrates in preference to a methyl group: both cis- and trans-\(\beta\)-methylstyrene oxides (entries 5 and 6) gave only phenylacetone upon rearrangement.

Rearrangement of styrene oxide did not give a very pure product. While starting material was seen to disappear by TLC in 15 min, the crude product appeared to be very impure and attempted purification gave very low yields (15%) of phenylacetaldehyde. Contrary to reports in the literature,\(^2d\) we were not able to repeat the rearrangement of styrene oxide with indium chloride in good yield. In our hands, styrene oxide rearranged rapidly, both with InCl\(_3\) and BiOClO\(_4\)·H\(_2\)O but the product phenylacetaldehyde was found to be unstable to the reaction conditions. A significant amount of product formed by aldol condensation of phenylacetaldehyde was detected in the crude product mixture. Aliphatic epoxides that contained a tertiary epoxide carbon also underwent rearrangement readily. For example, 1-methylcyclohexene oxide (entry 8) underwent ready rearrangement to give an 85:15 mixture of 2-methylcyclohexanone (migration of methyl group) and 1-methyl-1-cyclopentanecarboxaldehyde.
Table 1
Rearrangement of epoxides with BiOClO₄·xH₂O in CH₂Cl₂

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Epoxide</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Yield (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1¹¹</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>25 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3¹²</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4³⁴</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8³⁸</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>1 h</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>71⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9⁹</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>1 h</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>75⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10⁰⁰</td>
<td>![Epoxide Image]</td>
<td>40 min</td>
<td>![Product Image]</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Superscripts against entry # refer to literature reference for product. ²All reactions were run at room temperature. ³Yields refer to isolated, purified product. ⁴The ketone:aldehyde ratio in the crude product mixture was determined by GC analysis to be 85:15, respectively. ⁵Due to volatile nature of the product, the solvent was removed at atmospheric pressure using a water bath at 50 °C.
(migration of C–C bond), respectively. In contrast, rearrangement of 1-methylcyclohexene oxide with LiBr-HMPA in benzene gave 1-methyl-1-cyclopentanecarboxaldehyde as the major product (95%). Good yields of tert-butyl methyl ketone were obtained by rearrangement of the aliphatic oxide 2,3-dimethylbutene oxide (entry 9). The rearrangement of α-pinene oxide (entry 10) occurred quite readily at room temperature to give the expected aldehyde in good yield. Cyclohexene oxide did not undergo rearrangement even when refluxed for 12 h and the starting material was recovered in good yield. This indicates that BiOClO₄•xH₂O is a mild Lewis acid. When cyclohexene oxide is reacted with InCl₃, while no rearrangement occurs, the corresponding chlorohydrin is reported to form in good yield.

In summary, this work demonstrates a new method for high-yielding, selective rearrangement of aromatic epoxides to carbonyl compounds using BiOClO₄•xH₂O. Aliphatic epoxides containing a tertiary epoxide carbon also undergo facile rearrangement. Advantages of this method include low toxicity and low cost of the Lewis acid catalyst, fast reaction rates and insensitivity to air and moisture. A representative procedure is given here: A solution of trans-stilbene oxide (1.00 g, 5.10 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (20 mL) was stirred as BiOClO₄•xH₂O (0.331 g, 1.02 mmol) was added. After 25 min, water (10 mL) and CH₂Cl₂ (10 mL) were added and the organic layer was washed with 10% NaHCO₃ (10 mL) and saturated sodium chloride (10 mL). The organic layer was dried (Na₂SO₄) and the solvent was removed on a rotary evaporator to yield 0.879 g (88%) of diphenylacetaldehyde that was determined to be >98% pure by ¹H NMR.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement is made to the donors of The Petroleum Research Fund, administered by the American Chemical Society for partial support of this research. R.M. would also like to thank Illinois Wesleyan University for an Artistic and Scholarly Grant awarded to develop this research project.

References

8. BiOClO₄•xH₂O was purchased from Aldrich Chemical Company and used as received. While we did not encounter any problems with this reagent, caution should be exercised in handling perchlorates.