Sulfur cation radicals

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Abstract: The oxidation potentials of 2-silylated and 2-stannylated 1,3-dithianes have been determined by cyclic voltammetry. There is substantial, geometry-dependent, lowering of the oxidation potential by tin substituents as illustrated by 2,2-bis(trimethylstannyl)-1,3-dithiane whose oxidation potential of 0.19 V is almost 1 V lower than that of 1,3-dithiane itself. The UV He I photoelectron spectrum of this compound shows that its two lowest ionization potentials of 7.48 and 7.97 eV are about 1 eV lower than those of 1,3-dithiane. X-ray crystallographic structure studies on 2,2-bis(trimethylstannyl)-1,3-dithiane reveal that it adopts a chair conformation with an axial and an equatorial tin substituent. Variable temperature 13C NMR spectroscopic studies demonstrate that this compound undergoes ring inversion in solution with a barrier of approximately 13.5 kcal/mol.

Aliphatic sulfur cation radicals, R₂S⁺, are novel reactive intermediates that are formed on one-electron oxidation of dialkyl thioethers. The factors that control such electron-transfer and the stability of the sulfur cation radicals obtained are of interest. Metals and metalloids adjacent to the sulfur atom of thioethers may facilitate electron-transfer from the thioether and stabilize the sulfur cation radical obtained. This stabilization may result from bridging as shown in 1, hyperconjugation between the carbon-metal σ-bond and sulfur p-orbital as shown in 2 which requires the interacting bond and orbital to be coplanar, or inductive effects.

The interaction between a carbon-metal bond and sulfur cation radical may be analogous to that between carbenium ions and adjacent carbon-metal bonds. Experimental studies show that dramatic geometry-dependent interaction between an adjacent carbon-silicon bond and carbocationic center. Thus, the relative rates of solvolysis of 3, 4, and cyclohexyl trifluoroacetate in 97% aqueous trifluoroethanol are 2×10¹²:4×10¹²:1 (1). Theoretical studies show that the large rate acceleration of 3 is due to stabilization of the carbocationic center by Si-C hyperconjugation (2). The antiperiplanar geometry of 3 provides greater stabilization than the synclinal geometry of 4. Stabilization of carbocationic centers by an adjacent C-Sn bond is even greater than that observed with C-Si bonds (3). In contrast to the substantial stabilization of carbenium ions by an adjacent C-Si bond, interaction between carbon radicals and adjacent C-Si bond is modest.

The electrochemical oxidation potential of ethers in acetonitrile is rendered less anodic by at least 0.9 V by an adjacent C-Si bond (4). Ab initio calculations suggest that hyperconjugative stabilization of the oxygen cation radical by the adjacent C-Si σ-bond contributes to facilitated oxidation but is not the major factor responsible for this result. The major factor is the geometry-dependent destabilization of the ether lone pair HOMO by the adjacent C-Si σ-bond. That is, the energy of the HOMO of the ether is raised by overlap of the filled 2p-orbital of the oxygen atom with the filled C-Si σ-bond. Despite the substantial effect of an adjacent C-Si σ-bond on the oxidation potential of ethers, the effect on thioethers is modest at best. The interaction of a carbon-metal σ-bond and heteroatom p-orbital depends on their energies. The closer they are in energy the greater their interaction. Since the ionization potential of a C-Si σ-bond, 9.5-10.6 eV (5), is close to that of an ether oxygen lone pair,
9.0-10.0 eV (6), but much higher than that of a thioether 3p-lone pair, 8.2-8.7 eV (7,8), the interaction and consequent raising of the HOMO energy, therefore, is greater with ethers than thioethers, appended with an adjacent C-Si bond. However, the ionization potential of a C-Sn σ-bond, 8.5-9.7 eV (9), overlaps that of a thioether 3p-lone pair and interaction between these moieties should be substantial and result in an increase in HOMO energy and corresponding decrease in oxidation potential. This paper documents such geometry-dependent effects in 1,3-dithianes with adjacent C-Sn bonds. 2-Monosubstituted and 2,2-disubstituted-1,3-dithianes were chosen for study because many of them had already been synthesized and their conformational properties ascertained.

**Synthesis**

The 2-monosubstituted and 2,2-disubstituted-1,3-dithianes 5 studied were prepared as reported, or, for the new compounds, by straightforward extension of known methodology. Anancomeric 1,3-dithiane 6a was obtained as reported (9) and its silyl and stannyl derivatives 6b and c, respectively, were synthesized by deprotonation of 6a with n-butylithium followed by reaction with chlorotrimethylsilane and chlorotrimethylstannane, respectively. However, conditions for deprotonation of 6c could not be found despite extensive studies using a wide variety of bases. Generally, either no reaction or destannylation occurred. Consequently, new methods for synthesizing 2-metallated 1,3-dithianes were developed. Model studies were done to prepare 5, R=SnMe3, R'=H. Carbene 5, R,R'=- was generated as reported (11) from 7a by deprotonation with n-butylithium followed by decomposition of 7b with loss of thiolate. In the presence of hexamethyldistannane, the carbene inserted into the tin-tin bond to give 5, R=R'=SnMe3 in 94% yield. Alternatively, formation of carbene 5, R,R'=- in the presence of Me3SnLi produced, after protonation, 5, R=SnMe3, R'=H in 90% yield. Similarly, treatment of 6f with n-butylithium at room temperature gave carbanion 8 which decomposed to carbene 9 with loss of MeS- on heating at reflux. Carbene 9 could not be trapped with Me3SnSnMe3 but it was trapped with Me3SnLi to produce carbanion 10 which on protonation gave 6d in 41% yield and on stannylation afforded 6e in 48% yield.

The preferential formation of 6c, with an equatorial Me3Sn group, by deprotonation of 6a followed by stannylation, and its isomer 6d, by protonation of 10 are based on the known strong equatorial preference of the lone pair (12). This preference is further illustrated by the selective destannylation of 6e, on treatment with one equivalent of methylithium, to give 6d on protonation in 70% yield.

**Electrochemistry**

The oxidation potentials of 2-substituted 1,3-dithianes 5 and anancomeric 1,3-dithianes 6a-e were determined in acetonitrile by cyclic voltammetry. An irreversible oxidation was observed in all cases with the peak potentials recorded in Tables 1 and 2. In the cases indicated in the tables adsorption was a problem. However, this problem could be overcome by setting the initial potential close to the peak potential and beginning the scan as soon as the electrode was placed in the solution. Reproducible potentials could be obtained in this way.

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TABLE 1. Peak potentials for the oxidation of 2-substituted 1,3-dithianes 5 determined by cyclic voltammetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>R'</th>
<th>Ep°</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R'</th>
<th>Ep°</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R'</th>
<th>Ep°</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>1.18b</td>
<td>Me₂Si</td>
<td>Ph</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>0.74a</td>
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<td>Me₃Si</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Me₂Si</td>
<td>Me₂Si</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>Bu¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Et₂Si</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Me₂Si</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>0.44a</td>
<td>Bu₂Sn</td>
<td>Bu¹</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me₂Bu²Si</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>1.02c</td>
<td>Et₂Si</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>0.38a</td>
<td>Bu₂Sn</td>
<td>Ph</td>
<td>0.79d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pri₂Si</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>Pri₂Si</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>0.35d</td>
<td>Bu₂Sn</td>
<td>Ph</td>
<td>0.86d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Me₂Si</td>
<td>Bu¹</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Me₂Bu²Si</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>0.35d</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>Me₂Sn</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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*Peak potential at Pt electrode in acetonitrile, 0.1M LiClO₄, versus 0.1M AgNO₃/Ag electrode, at a scan rate of 100 mV/s.

The effect on the oxidation potential of 1,3-dithiane by mettallation at C2 may be compared with alkylation at this position. The oxidation potentials of 2-alkyl and 2-aryl-1,3-dithianes are 0.73-0.75 V and a second such substituent has no significant further effect on the oxidation potential (13). Thus an equatorial alkyl or aryl substituent lowers the oxidation potential of 1,3-dithiane but an additional axial substituent is without further effect. The oxidation potentials of C2 metallated 1,3-dithianes are in the range of 0.74-1.02 V as seen in Table 1. The effect of a 2-trimethylstannyl group is comparable to that of a 2-alkyl or aryl group in lowering the oxidation potential but curiously the effect of a 2-silyl substituent is more modest. In contrast to the comparable effects of an equatorial stannyl substituent and alkyl or aryl groups, an axial tin substituent substantially lowers the oxidation potential of 1,3-dithiane. This is most dramatically illustrated by 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn whose peak potential of 0.19 V is almost 1 V less positive than that of 1,3-dithiane itself. The effect of an axial stannyl group is also evident in the 2-silyl-2-stannyl and 2-t-butyl-2-stannyl derivatives but ameliorated by conformational equilibria. In the case of 5, R=R'=Me₂Sn, there must be an axial tin substituent if the molecule adopts a chair conformation. Ring inversion of the chair forms interconverts axial and equatorial tin substituents in this case. On the other hand, 2-silyl-2-stannyl and 2-t-butyl-2-stannyl-1,3-dithianes each have two interconverting chair conformations: one with the stannyl group axial and the other with this substituent equatorial. Another factor which may contribute to the exceptional lowering of the oxidation potential of 2-electrode-electrode reactions.

TABLE 2. Peak potentials for the oxidation of anancomeric 1,3-dithianes determined by cyclic voltammetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compound</th>
<th>Ep°</th>
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<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c</td>
<td>0.75b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d</td>
<td>0.40bc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6e</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Peak potential at Pt electrode in acetonitrile, 0.1M LiClO₄, versus 0.1M AgNO₃/Ag reference electrode, at a scan rate of 100 mV/s.

*Problems with adsorption overcome by setting the initial potential just below the peak potential and scanning as soon as the electrode was placed in the sample.

*Peak potential at a glassy carbon electrode was 0.29V and the adsorption problem diminished.

TABLE 3. Comparison of ¹³C NMR spectra of 5, R=R'=Me₂Sn at 190 K and 6e at room temperature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>5, R=R'=Me₂Sn</th>
<th>6e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 ax Me₃Sn</td>
<td>-9.67</td>
<td>-8.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 eq Me₂Sn</td>
<td>-5.78</td>
<td>-4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 C(2)</td>
<td>19.75</td>
<td>29.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 C(4,6)</td>
<td>29.30</td>
<td>39.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 C(5)</td>
<td>25.33</td>
<td>44.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 J(ax Sn-C(4,6))</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 J(eq Sn-C(4,6))</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chemical shift values in ppm versus Me₂Si.

*Coupling constants in Hz.

*6 of 21.15 ppm is calculated when 19.75 is corrected for C4,6 Me effect.

*6 of 38.90 ppm is calculated when 29.50 is corrected for C4,6 Me effect.

*6 of 43.33 ppm is calculated when 25.33 is corrected for the C4,6 Me effect.

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oxidation potential of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn is that the two vicinal tin substituents may interact with each other lowering the C-Sn ionization potential. Such interaction between geminal Me₃Sn substituents in (Me₃Sn)₂CHCH₃ has been reported (14). The lowered C-Sn ionization potential in 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn results in a better energy match between this bond and sulfur 3p-lone pair resulting in greater interaction, raising of the HOMO energy, and lowering of the oxidation potential. An axial silyl substituent also lowers the oxidation potential of 1,3-dithiane as illustrated by 5, R=R'=Me₃Si but the effect is small compared with that of an axial tin substituent. The greater effect of an axial tin substituent than that of an equatorial tin substituent appears to be illustrated by the lower oxidation potential of 6d than 6c as seen in Table 2. If both 6c and 6d adopt chair conformations then the tin substituent in 6c is equatorial and that in 6d is axial. The substantially lower oxidation potential for 6d compared with 6c is consistent with greater interaction between the C-Sn bond and sulfur lone pair when the tin substituent is axial than equatorial. However, the predominant conformation of 6d in solution is not a chair as shown below by NMR spectroscopic studies.

**Photoelectron Spectroscopy**

The exceptionally low oxidation potential of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn prompted determination of its ionization potential by photoelectron spectroscopy. The photoelectron spectrum of 1,3-dithiane has been reported (15). The ionization potentials of 8.54 and 8.95 eV are ascribed to removal of sulfur 3p-nonbonding electrons. There are two such ionization potentials due to the interaction of the p-type lone pair orbitals on each of the two sulfur atoms. The photoelectron spectrum of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn is shown in Fig. 1. The lowest ionization potentials are 7.48 and 7.97 eV. Thus the ionization potentials for 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn are about 1 eV lower than those for 1,3-dithiane itself. Both the photoelectron spectroscopic ionization potentials and electrochemical peak potential demonstrate the remarkable facilitation of electron-transfer from 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn compared with 1,3-dithiane.

![Fig. 1 UV He I photoelectron spectrum of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn. Dotted lines represent curve fitting of the experimental spectrum.](image1)

![Fig. 2 ORTEP Drawing of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn. Thermal ellipsoids are drawn at the 50% probability level.](image2)

**X-Ray Crystallography**

The conformation of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn in the solid state was unequivocally determined by X-ray crystallographic techniques. The molecule crystallizes in the monoclinic space group P2₁/c with \(a=13.1084(5)\AA, b=16.456(1)\AA, c=15.394(7)\AA, \) and \(\beta=93.320(4)^\circ\). An ORTEP drawing of the molecule is shown in Fig. 2. The bond lengths and bond angles are within the expected ranges and the molecule adopts a chair conformation.

**NMR Spectroscopy**

Insight into the conformational behavior of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn in solution was obtained by variable temperature \(¹³C\) NMR spectroscopic studies in CD₂Cl₂. At room temperature only one absorption was measured for the carbon atoms of the Me₃Sn groups at -6.73 ppm. However, on cooling this signal broadened and then separated into two signals of equal intensity at -9.67 [\(¹¹C¹³C¹¹⁹Sn=344.328\) Hz] and -5.78 ppm [\(¹¹C¹³C¹¹⁹Sn=305.290\) Hz] at 190 K as shown in Fig. 3. From the coalescence temperature of ca. 242 K a barrier for ring inversion of 13.5 kcal/mol was calculated. This barrier is significantly higher than that of 10.3 kcal/mol reported for chair-chair interconversion of 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dithiane (16). In contrast to the dynamic behavior of 5, R=R'=Me₃Sn, 5, R=Me₃Sn, R'=H does not undergo ring inversion and the tin substituent remains equatorially disposed (17). It has also been
reported that the magnitude of $^{3}J(\mathrm{^{13}C-^{117}Sn})$ depends on the dihedral angle. For $5$, $R=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$, $R'=H$, with an equatorial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$, the coupling constant between C(4,6) and equatorial tin is 37.5 Hz and that between C(4,6) and axial tin is 14.7 Hz.

Variable temperature $^{13}C$ NMR spectroscopic studies on $5$, $R=\mathrm{Et}_{3}Si$, $R'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ in CD$_2$Cl$_2$ reveal ring inversion. One absorption for the $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ group is observed at room temperature but at 190 K two signals are seen at -8.23 and -4.53 ppm in a 3:2 ratio. The presence of the conformer with an axial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ groups accounts for the substantial lowering of the oxidation potential for the 2-silyl-2-stannyl-1,3-dithianes reported in Table 1. A similar explanation applies to the lowered oxidation potential of 2-t-butyl-2-stannyl-1,3-dithianes. The lack of a lowered oxidation potential for 2-phenyl-2-stannyl-1,3-dithianes is a reflection of the known preference for an equatorial tin substituent in $5$, $R=\mathrm{Ph}$, $R'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ (17).

As shown in Table 3, the $^{13}C$ NMR spectrum of $6e$ at room temperature is very similar to that of $5$, $R=\mathrm{R}'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ at 190 K when the chemical shift data are corrected for the effect of the C4,6 Me groups. The $^{119}Sn$ NMR spectrum of $6e$ also shows nonequivalent $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ groups with two absorptions at 21.93 and 25.62 ppm versus $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$. Thus $6e$ adopts a static chair conformation with an axial and an equatorial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ group. Surprisingly, the $^{13}C$ and $^{119}Sn$ chemical shift for the equatorial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ group in $6e$, -6.96 and 15.54 ppm respectively, are very close to those for the presumed axial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ group in $6d$, -7.63 and 15.49 ppm respectively. In contrast, the $^{13}C$ chemical shifts for the axial and equatorial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ groups in $6e$ differ by 3.73 ppm and their $^{119}Sn$ chemical shifts differ by 3.69 ppm. Furthermore, the $^{13}C$ chemical shifts for the axial and equatorial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ groups in $5$, $R=\mathrm{R}'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ at 190 K differ by 3.89 ppm. Consequently it was surmised that $6d$ does not adopt a chair conformation. Indeed $6g$ is suggested to adopt a boat (10) or equilibrating twist (18) conformations. Nuclear Overhauser enhancements were used to prove that the predominant conformation of $6d$ is not a chair. The axial H4,6 atoms are close in space to axial H2 in the chair conformation of $6c$ with an equatorial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ group. Irradiation of H4,6 results in a 26% nOe. The axial H4,6 atoms are far removed from equatorial H2 in $6d$ with an axial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ and irradiation of H4,6 resulted in no nOe of H2. However, irradiation of H5 results in a 46% nOe of H2. In a chair conformation axial H5 and equatorial H2 are widely separated but in a boat or twist conformation these hydrogen atoms are very close to each other. This result proves that $6d$ preferentially adopts a twist conformation. The lower oxidation potential of $6d$ compared with $6c$ as seen in Table 2 may be ascribed to greater overlap of the C-Sn σ-bond and sulfur 3p orbital in the twist conformation of $6d$ than in the chair conformation of $6c$ or, less likely, that a small amount of the chair conformation of $6d$ is present at equilibrium and it is preferentially oxidized. Finally it is interesting to note that the oxidation potential of $6e$ is significantly higher than $5$, $R=\mathrm{R}'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$, although both compounds adopt chair geometries with an axial $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ group and have geminal $\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ groups. This difference is ascribed to the conformational anchoring in $6e$ but rapid ring inversion in $5$, $R=\mathrm{R}'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ and that the axial C-Sn bond in a chair conformation is not optimally aligned with the sulfur 3p orbital (the torsion angle between a perpendicular to the C2-S1-C6 plane is 18° in the X-ray crystal structure geometry of $5$, $R=\mathrm{R}'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$). Attainment of conformations with a more optimized geometry for C-Sn bond interaction with the sulfur lone pair in $5$, $R=\mathrm{R}'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$ is facile but resisted in $6e$.

Acknowledgment. The authors gratefully acknowledge support of this work by the U.S. Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, Grant No. HL15104 and thank Professor Dennis Lichtenberger and Dr. Mark Jatcho for measurement of the PES of $5$, $R=\mathrm{R}'=\mathrm{Me}_{3}Sn$.

REFERENCES