Electronic Supplementary Information

Autocatalytic aerobic *ipso*-hydroxylation of arylboronic acid with Hantzsch ester and Hantzsch pyridine

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(A) General information

All reactions were carried out by standard procedures under air condition at room temperature unless stated otherwise. Commercially available reagents from Sigma Aldrich and J&K were used as received unless stated otherwise. The solvents were dried over a solvent purification system from Innovative Technology. Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on a Bruker AMX400 (400 MHz) spectrometer or a Bruker Avance III 400MHz Spectrometer. Chemical shifts (δ) are reported in parts per million (ppm) relative to TMS (δ 0.00) for the ¹H NMR and referenced to residual signals in NMR solvents (CDCl₃ at δ 77.16) for the ¹³C NMR measurements. Coupling constant (*J*) are quoted in Hz. High resolution mass spectra were obtained on a Finnigan MAT 95XL Mass Spectrometer. Analytical thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed with Merck pre-coated TLC plates, silica gel 60F-254, layer thickness 0.25 mm. Flash chromatography separations were performed on Merck 60 (0.040-0.063 mm) mesh silica gel.

(B) General procedure for the *ipso*-hydroxylation of arylboronic acids



To a Schlenk flask was charged with arylboronic acid 1 (0.1 mmol) and Hantzsch ester **HE1** (1.5 equiv, 0.15 mmol). The flask was sealed with a rubber septum, evacuated under vacuum, and refilled with pure oxygen using a balloon. Then, 2 mL of acetone was added. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 16 hours. The solution was concentrated under reduced pressure and the residue was purified by flash column chromatography using silica gel as the stationary phase and *n*-hexane/ethyl acetate as the gradient eluent to afford the desired phenol products **2**.

(C) Characterization of products

4-(methylthio)-phenol (2a)¹

Appearance: pale yellow solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.24 – 7.20 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.65 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.56 Hz, 2H), 6.81 – 6.77 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.70 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.58 Hz, 2H), 4.78 (s, 1H), 2.44 (s, 3H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 154.20, 130.49, 129.08, 116.17, 18.20 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₇H₈SO [M–H]⁻: 139.02231; found: 139.02229 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.3 (H/EA 5:1)

4'-hydroxyacetophenone $(2b)^1$



Appearance: pale yellow solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.93 – 7.89 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.75 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.50 Hz, 2H), 6.94 – 6.90 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.85 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.50 Hz, 2H), 2.57 (s, 3H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 197.88, 160.84, 131.12, 129.95, 115.45, 26.36 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₈H₈O₂ [M–H]⁻: 135.04515; found: 135.04501 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.1 (H/EA 5:1)

Phenol $(2c)^1$

OH

Appearance: white solid

¹**H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 7.28 – 7.23 (tt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.14 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.09 Hz, 2H), 6.96 – 6.92 (tt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 7.61 Hz, 1H), 6.85 – 6.82 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 7.65 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.83 Hz, 2H), 4.88 (bs, 1H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 155.56, 129.81, 120.93, 115.41

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₆O [M–H]⁻: 93.03459; found: 93.03447

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.3$ (H/EA 5:1)

4-methylphenol $(2d)^2$

OH Me

Appearance: white solid

¹**H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 7.05 – 7.03 (d, *J* = 8.10 Hz, 2H), 6.75 – 6.72 (d, *J* = 8.60 Hz, 2H), 4.66 (bs, 1H), 2.28 (s, 3H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 153.33, 130.20, 130.11, 115.19, 20.60

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C_7H_8O [M–H]⁻:107.05024 ; found: 107.05022

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.5$ (H/EA 5:1)

<u>4-ethylphenol $(2e)^3$ </u>



Appearance: pale yellow solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.08 – 7.06 (d, *J* = 8.05 Hz, 2H), 6.77 – 6.75 (d, *J* = 8.30 Hz, 2H), 4.74 (s, 1H), 2.61 – 2.55 (q, *J* = 7.57 Hz, 2H), 1.22 – 1.19 (t, *J* = 7.63 Hz, 3H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 153.51, 136.68, 129.03, 115.23, 28.10, 16.03 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₈H₁₀O [M–H]⁻: 121.06589; found: 121.06574 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.5 (H/EA 5:1) <u>4-*tert*-butylphenol $(2f)^4$ </u>

Appearance: white solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.28 – 7.24 (d, *J* = 8.65 Hz, 2H), 6.79 – 6.75 (d, *J* = 8.70 Hz, 2H), 4.60 (s, 1H), 1.29 (s, 9H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 153.25, 143.67, 126.58, 114.85, 34.21, 31.66 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₁₀H₁₄O [M–H]⁻: 149.09719; found: 149.09696 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.4 (H/EA 5:1)

[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-ol (2g)³



Appearance: while solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.56 – 7.53 (d, J = 7.25 Hz, 2H), 7.50 – 7.46 (d, J = 8.60 Hz, 2H), 7.44 – 7.40 (t, J = 7.73 Hz, 2H), 7.33 – 7.29 (t, J = 7.38 Hz, 1H), 6.93 – 6.89 (dt, ³J_{ortho} = 9.55 Hz, ⁴J_{meta} = 2.55 Hz, 2H), 4.80 (s, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 155.18, 140.88, 134.18, 128.87, 128.54, 126.86, 115.76

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for $C_{12}H_{10}O$ [M–H]⁻: 169.06589; found: 169.06584

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.4$ (H/EA 5:1)

3,5-dimethylphenol $(2h)^4$

OH Me Me

Appearance: pale yellow solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.58 (s, 1H), 6.46 (s, 2H), 4.60 (s, 1H), 2.27 (s, 6H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 155.51, 139.69, 122.69, 131.13, 21.39 **QEFMS (ESI):** m/z calcd for $C_8H_{10}O [M-H]^-$: 121.06589; found: 121.06575 **Column chromatography:** $R_f = 0.5$ (H/EA 5:1)

<u>3,5-di-*tert*-butylphenol (2i)⁵</u>

Appearance: pale yellow solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.01 – 6.99 (t, J = 1.60 Hz, 1H), 6.70 – 6.68 (d, J = 1.55 Hz, 2H), 4.64 (s, 1H), 1.30 (s, 18H)
¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 155.01, 152.75, 115.08, 109.77, 34.99, 31.52
QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₁₄H₂₂O [M–H]⁻: 205.15979; found: 205.15960

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.5$ (H/EA 5:1)

2,4,6-trimethylphenol (2j)⁶

OH Me. Me Me

Appearance: white solid ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.79 (s, 2H), 4.44 (s, 1H), 2.21 (s, 9H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 150.00, 129.42, 129.24, 122.88, 20.52, 15.97 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₉H₁₂O [M–H]⁻: 135.08154; found: 135.08145 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.6 (H/EA 5:1)

2,4,6-triisopropylphenol $(2k)^7$

OH . Έr ⁱPr

Appearance: yellow oil

¹**H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 6.93 (s, 2H), 4.65 (s, 1H), 3.22 – 3.11 (sept, *J* = 6.87 Hz, 2H), 2.92 – 2.80 (sept, *J* = 6.92 Hz, 1H), 1.31 – 1.28 (d, *J* = 6.84 Hz, 12H), 1.27 – 1.24 (d, *J* = 6.96 Hz, 6H),

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 148.05, 140.86, 133.42, 121.42, 33.99, 27.48, 24.50, 22.84 **OEFMS (ESI):** m/z calcd for C₁₅H₂₄O [M–H]⁻: 219.17544; found: 219.17542

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.7$ (H/EA 5:1)

<u>4-hydroxylphenol $(2l)^2$ </u>

OH OH OH

Appearance: white solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-*d6*): δ 8.63 (s, 2H), 6.55 – 6.54 (d, 4H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-*d6*): δ 149.76, 115.68

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₆O₂ [M–H]⁻: 109.02950; found: 109.02941

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.4$ (H/EA 2:1)

<u>4-methoxyphenol $(2m)^1$ </u>



Appearance: while solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.81 – 6.75 (m, 4H), 4.74 (s, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 153.86, 149.58, 116.17, 114.97, 55.93 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₇H₈O₂ [M–H]⁻: 123.04515; found: 123.04504 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.3 (H/EA 5:1) <u>3-methoxyphenol</u> $(2n)^6$

Appearance: pale yellow oil

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.16 – 7.11 (t, *J* = 8.12 Hz, 1H), 6.52 – 6.50 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.09 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.32 Hz, 1H), 6.45 – 6.44 (m, 1H), 6.43 – 6.41 (m, 1H), 5.17 (s, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 161.10, 156.83, 130.28, 107.86, 106.58, 101.62, 55.41 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₇H₈O₂ [M–H]⁻: 123.04515; found: 123.04517 Column chromatography: R_f = 0. 3 (H/EA 5:1)

<u>3,4-dimethoxyphenol $(20)^2$ </u>



Appearance: pale red oil

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.74 – 6.71 (d, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.60 Hz, 1H), 6.48 – 6.46 (d, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.80 Hz, 1H), 6.36 – 6.32 (dd, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.58 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.83 Hz, 1H), 4.73 (bs, 1H), 3.84 (s, 1H), 3.82 (s, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 150.12, 150.04, 143.39, 112.36, 105.84, 100.66, 56.65, 55.97

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for $C_8H_{10}O_3$ $[M+Na]^+$: 177.05222; found: 177.05209

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.2$ (H/EA 5:1)

<u>3,4-(methylenedioxy)phenol</u> $(2p)^4$

Appearance: pale red oil

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.66 – 6.64 (d, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.30 Hz, 1H), 6.43 – 6.42 (d, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.50 Hz, 1H), 6.26 – 6.23 (dd, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.30 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.50 Hz, 1H), 5.91 (s, 1H), 4.58 (bs, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 150.79, 148.43, 141.71, 108.26, 106.75, 101.32, 98.41 **QEFMS (ESI):** m/z calcd for $C_7H_6O_3$ [M–H]⁻: 137.02442; found: 137.02428 **Column chromatography:** $R_f = 0.3$ (H/EA 5:1)

4-fluorophenol $(2q)^2$

OH F

Appearance: while solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.96 – 6.990 (m, 2H), 6.80 – 6.75 (m, 2H), 4.80 (bs, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 158.35, 156.46, 151.57, 116.37 – 116.03 (dd) QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₅OF [M–H]⁻: 111.02517; found: 111.02503 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.3 (H/EA 5:1)

3-fluorophenol $(2\mathbf{r})^8$

OH

Appearance: colorless oil ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.21 – 7.15 (m, 1H), 6.67 – 6.57 (m, 3H), 5.34 (bs, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 164.72, 162.77, 156.96 – 156.87 (d), 130.67 – 130.59 (d), 111.28 – 111.26 (d), 107.97 – 107.80 (d), 103.16 – 103.26 (d) QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₅OF [M–H]⁻: 111.02517; found: 111.02520 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.4 (H/EA 5:1)

4-chlorophenol $(2s)^3$

OH Cl

Appearance: white solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.21 – 7.17 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.75 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.69 Hz, 2H), 6.79 – 6.75 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.85 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.66 Hz, 2H), 4.92 (s, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 154.15, 129.67, 125.85, 116.78 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₅OCl [M–H]⁻: 126.99562; found: 126.99561 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.4 (H/EA 5:1)

2-chlorophenol $(2t)^6$

Appearance: colorless oil

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.33 – 7.31 (dd, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.00 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.30 Hz, 1H), 7.21 – 7.16 (td, ³*J*_{ortho} = 7.76 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.12 Hz, 1H), 7.04 – 7.01 (dd, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.18 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.23 Hz, 1H), 6.90 – 6.85 (td, ³*J*_{ortho} = 7.70 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.12 Hz, 1H), 5.60 (s, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 151.46, 129.13, 128.54, 121.50, 120.00, 116.39 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₅OCl [M–H]⁻: 126.99562; found: 126.99567 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.4 (H/EA 5:1)

4-bromophenol $(2\mathbf{u})^4$

OH Br

Appearance: yellow oil

¹**H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 7.35 – 7.31 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.90 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.78 Hz, 2H), 6.74 – 6.70 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.85 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.75 Hz, 2H), 4.83 (s, 1H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 154.77, 132.61, 117.32, 113.01

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₅OBr [M–H]⁻: 170.94510; found: 170.94518

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.4$ (H/EA 5:1)

3-bromophenol $(2v)^6$



Appearance: yellow oil

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.12 – 7.06 (m ,2H), 7.02 – 7.01 (m, 1H), 6.78 – 6.75 (m, 1H), 5.03 (bs, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 156.46, 130.93, 124.12, 122.93, 118.93, 114.36 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₅OBr [M–H]⁻: 170.94510; found: 170.94521 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.4 (H/EA 5:1)

<u>2-bromophenol $(2w)^1$ </u>

OH Br

Appearance: pale yellow oil

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.48 – 7.45 (dd, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.00 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.20 Hz, 1H), 7.24 – 7.20 (td, ³*J*_{ortho} = 7.73 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.10 Hz, 1H), 7.04 – 7.02 (dd, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.13 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.18 Hz, 1H), 6.83 – 6.79 (td, ³*J*_{ortho} = 7.68 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 1.15 Hz, 1H), 5.57 (s, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 152.36, 132.16, 129.31, 121.94, 116.27, 110.37 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₆H₅OBr [M–H]⁻: 170.94510; found: 170.94531 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.5 (H/EA 5:1)

(E)-4-hydroxycinnamic acid $(2x)^9$



The arylboronic acid substrate **1x** was prepared according to K. Khaldoun et al. *Synthesis* **2019**, *51*, 3891–3900.

Appearance: white solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-*d6*): $\delta \sim 10$ (bs, 1H), 7.52 – 7.49 (d, J = 8.49 Hz, 2H), 7.49 – 7.45 (d, J = 16.10 Hz, 1H), 6.79 – 6.77 (d, J = 8.24 Hz, 2H), 6.30 – 6.26 (d, J = 15.89 Hz, 2H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO-*d6*): δ 168.10, 159.61, 144.02, 130.11, 125.34, 115.78, 115.64 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₉H₈O₃ [M–H]⁻: 163.04007; found: 163.04009 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.3 (H/EA 1:1)

Ethyl 4-hydroxybenzoate $(2y)^{10}$



Appearance: white solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.98 – 7.94 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.80 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.38 Hz, 2H), 6.89 – 6.85 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.80 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.38 Hz, 2H), 6.17 (s, 1H), 4.38 – 4.32 (q, *J* = 7.12 Hz, 2H), 1.40 – 1.36 (t, *J* = 7.08 Hz, 3H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 166.91, 160.16, 132.02, 122.91, 115.32, 61.01, 14.48

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₉H₁₀O₃ [M–H]⁻: 165.05572; found: 165.05544

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.2$ (H/EA 5:1)

<u>4-hydroxybenaldehyde $(2z)^8$ </u>



Appearance: pale yellow solid

¹**H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 9.86 (s, 1H), 7.84 – 7.80 (d, J = 8.55 Hz, 2H), 6.99 – 6.96 (d, J = 8.55 Hz, 2H), 6.39 (bs, 1H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 191.36, 161.73, 132.66, 129.98, 116.14

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₇H₆O₂ [M–H]⁻: 121.02950; found: 121.02930

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.1$ (H/EA 5:1)

4-cyanophenol $(2aa)^3$

Appearance: white solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.56 – 7.53 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.79 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.14 Hz, 2H), 6.92 – 6.89 (dt, ³*J*_{ortho} = 8.85 Hz, ⁴*J*_{meta} = 2.08 Hz, 2H), 6.25 (bs, 1H) ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 159.75, 134.31, 119.21, 116.37, 103.73 QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₇H₅NO [M–H]⁻: 118.02984; found: 118.02970 Column chromatography: R_f = 0.5 (H/EA 2:1)

Dibenzo[b,d]furan-4-ol (2ab)¹¹



Appearance: white solid

¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.95 – 7.93 (d, J = 7.67 Hz, 1H), 7.59 – 7.56 (d, J = 8.25 Hz, 1H), 7.54 – 7.51 (d, J = 7.70 Hz, 1H), 7.49 – 7.45 (t, J = 7.73 Hz, 1H), 7.38 – 7.34 (t, J = 7.47 Hz, 1H), 7.25 – 7.21 (t, J = 7.81 Hz, 1H), 7.07 – 7.04 (d, J = 7.91 Hz, 1H), 5.83 (bs, 1H)
¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 156.11, 144.16, 141.21, 127.34, 125.85, 124.66, 123.77, 123.06, 121.10, 113.75, 112.89, 111.87
QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₁₂H₈O₂ [M–H]⁻: 183.04515; found: 183.04503

Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.4$ (H/EA 4:1)

Cyclohexanol (2ac)¹²

OH

Appearance: colorless oil

¹**H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 3.64 – 3.57 (dq, *J* = 8.8, 4.1 Hz, 1H), 1.92 – 1.86 (m, 2H), 1.76 – 1.71 (m, 2H), 1.57 – 1.50 (m, 2H), 1.31 – 1.23 (m, 4H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 70.48, 35.68, 25.58, 24.26 Column chromatography: $R_f = 0.3$ (H/EA 4:1)

(D) Studies on oxidant-sensitive substrates

Ipso-hydroxylation of 4-(methylthio)phenylboronic acid 1a

Using substrate **1a**, the mild **HE1**/O₂ protocol exclusively oxidized the boronic acid, keeping the thioether group intact (Scheme S1a). However, using H₂O₂ as the oxidant showed unsatisfactory selectivity. Under the literature conditions,⁶ low conversion was attained and trace a small amount of sulfoxide **2a**' was detected (Scheme S1b-i). In prolonged reaction time, the reaction progress was monitored (Figure S1) and a higher conversion was achieved but more sulfoxide **2a**' was formed (Scheme S1b-ii). When the oxidant was added in far excess according to another literature method (Scheme S1b-iii),¹³ the over oxidized product sulfone **2a**'' was formed quantitative. When reduced amount of H₂O₂ (1.0 or 1.5 equiv) was used, the efficiency dropped and sulfoxides were still generated (Scheme S1b-iv and v).



Figure S1 Reaction progress with substrate **1a** and oxidant H₂O₂ using the conditions in Scheme S1b-ii.



Scheme S1 Chemoselectivity performance in the oxidation of substrate 1a

^{*a*} Standard reaction conditions. Isolated yield.

^{*b*} Reaction conditions: 4-(methylthio)phenylboronic acid **1a** (0.5 mmol), H₂O₂, EtOH (0.33 M), r.t. NMR yields using dibromomethane as the internal standard.

Ipso-hydroxylation of phenylboronic acids 1e, 1x, 1z and 1aa

Substrates bearing benzylic ethyl (1e), propenoic acid (1x), aldehyde (1z), and cyano (1aa) groups could be over oxidized using some literature protocols such as ascorbate/quinone.¹ In sharp contrast, these substituents survived using the HE1/O₂ protocol (Scheme S2). For instance, boronic acid 2e was obtained and no benzylic oxidation product 2e' was detected. For the case with substrate 1x, product 2x was obtained in 74% yield and no epoxide 2x' was formed. Boronic acid 2z was obtained in excellent yield and the aldehyde remained intact. The cyano group in 1aa also well-survived and boronic 2aa was obtained quantitative and no amide 2aa' was detected.

Scheme S2 Chemoselectivity of the oxidation of substrates 1e, 1x, 1z, and 1aa under optimized conditions^{*a*}



^a Standard reaction conditions.

(E) Studies on the initial rate of reaction

Synthesis of dioctyl 2,6-dimethyl-1,4-dihydropyridine-3,5-dicarboxylate (**HE2**) and dioctyl 2,6dimethylpyridine-3,5-dicarboxylate (**HP2**)

Octyl acetoacetate was prepared according to the modified literature procedure.¹⁴ To a roundbottom flask was charged with ethyl acetoacetate (5.7 mL, 45 mmol), *n*-octanol (10.6 mL, 67.5 mmol) and toluene (200 mL), followed by the addition of boric acid catalyst (0.2 mL, 10 mol%). A pressure-equalized addition funnel containing a cotton plug and 5 Å molecular sieves (pellets) was directly attached above the round-bottom flask to remove ethanol, a water condenser was subsequently connected to the addition funnel. The resultant solution mixture was heated at reflux for 10 hours with continuous removal of ethanol. The solution was concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by flash column chromatography using silica gel as the stationary phase and *n*-hexane/ethyl acetate as the gradient eluent to afford octyl acetoacetate.



HE2 was prepared according to the modified literature procedure.¹⁵ To a Schlenk flask was charged with octyl acetoacetate (4.5 mL, 20 mmol), hexamethylenetetramine (0.4 g, 3 mmol), ammonium acetate (0.4 g, 5 mmol) and ethanol (5 mL) under nitrogen atmosphere. The resultant mixture was heated at reflux for 30 minutes and subsequently cooled to room temperature. The light-yellow precipitate was filtered and recrystallized from ethanol to afford **HE2**.

Dioctyl 2,6-dimethyl-1,4-dihydropyridine-3,5-dicarboxylate (HE2)¹⁴

Appearance: light yellow solid

¹**H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 5.15 (s, 1H), 4.11 – 4.07 (t, *J* = 6.68 Hz, 4H), 3.27 (s, 2H), 2.19 (s, 6H), 1.68 – 1.61 (quin, *J* = 7.03 Hz, 4H), 1.38 – 1.26 (m, 20H), 0.89 – 0.86 (t, *J* = 6.88 Hz, 6H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 168.23, 144.84, 99.77, 64.02, 31.95, 29.39, 29.37, 28.93, 26.23, 24.95, 22.79, 19.31, 14.24

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for $C_{25}H_{43}NO_4$ [M+Na]⁺: 444.30843; found: 444.30806



The **HP2** was prepared according to the literature procedure.¹⁶

Dioctyl 2,6-dimethylpyridine-3,5-dicarboxylate (HP2)¹⁴

Appearance: pale yellow liquid

¹**H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃):** δ 8.66 (s, 1H), 4.32 – 4.29 (t, *J* = 6.73 Hz, 4H), 2.83 (s, 6H), 1.79 – 1.73 (quin, *J* = 7.14 Hz, 4H), 1.45 – 1.24 (m, 20H), 0.88 – 0.85 (t, *J* = 6.85 Hz, 6H)

¹³C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 166.12, 162.35, 141.11, 123.19, 65.69, 31.90, 29.33, 29.31,

28.74, 26.16, 15.10, 22.75, 14.20

QEFMS (ESI): m/z calcd for C₂₅H₄₁NO₄ [M+H]⁺: 420.31084; found: 420.31007

Reaction progress monitored by NMR

To an NMR tube was charged with phenylboronic acid (1c) (3.0 mg, 0.025 mmol), HE2 (10.5 mg, 0.025 mmol) and dibromomethane (7 μ L, 0.1 mmol). Then, 500 μ L of acetone-*d6* was added. The tube was filled with pure oxygen. The reaction progress was monitored by NMR with data collected automatically at stated time interval. HP2 was added at the initial stage of reaction (orange line: 10 mol%; grey line: 0 mol%). The amounts of each component were used with respect to 1 equivalence of dibromomethane as the internal standard (Figure S2).



Figure S2 Reaction progress with 1c and HE2 monitored by NMR.

(F) Hantzsch pyridine impurity in Hantzsch ester

NMR study on the commercial sample of HE1

¹H NMR study was performed on the commercial bottle of **HE1**. It was found that c.a. 8% of **HP1** existed in the sample (Figure S3).



Figure S3 ¹H NMR study on the commercial HE1.

NMR study on the commercial sample of HE1 after exposure under air

A solid sample of commercial **HE1** was exposed to air for one week (Figure S4). The amount of **HP1** increased by c.a. 2%, attributed to the air oxidation of **HE1**. So, we believe that oxygen might oxidize **HE1** to **HP1** during the reaction. The **HP1** would then enhance the reaction rate of boronic oxidation by promoting the generation of hydrogen peroxy radical. This might explain why the reaction rate could increase eventually even when **HP** was not added initially.



Figure S4 ¹H NMR study on the commercial HE1 sample after 1 week of exposure under air.

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