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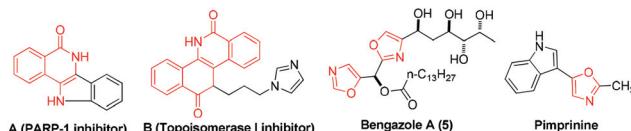
## Catalyst-controlled synthesis of 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-one and oxazole derivatives†

Ben Niu,<sup>a</sup> Ruixing Liu,<sup>b</sup> Yin Wei<sup>ID \*b</sup> and Min Shi<sup>\*a,c,b</sup>

A facile synthetic method to access 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-one and oxazole derivatives was disclosed in this paper. The reaction of *N*-(pivaloyloxy)-amides with ynamides produced 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-ones in good yields in the presence of  $\text{Cp}^*\text{Rh}(\text{III})$  catalyst through a C–H bond functionalization. Using  $\text{Sc}(\text{OTf})_3$  as the catalyst, oxazole derivatives were obtained in good yields from the same reaction. This protocol features good functional group tolerance and excellent regioselectivity.

Isoquinolin-1(2H)-ones are probably the most ubiquitous heterocycles that widely exist in natural products, medicinal agents and functional materials.<sup>1</sup> Notably, 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-ones are also prevalent core structural units. Many compounds containing 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-one motifs exhibit potent biological activities.<sup>1a–e</sup> For example, molecule **A** is a new scaffold that can be used as a kind of PARP-1 inhibitor (Scheme 1). Compound **B** is designed as a topoisomerase I (Top1) inhibitor as shown in Scheme 1. Owing to their indispensable biomedical value, the exploration of their synthetic method has been carried out during the past few years. However, the methods that have been explored for the synthesis of 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-one frameworks are very limited and have some obvious drawbacks,<sup>1a–e,2</sup> such as harsh reaction conditions, multiple-step sequences and a longer reaction time. Therefore, it is quite urgent to develop simpler, general, and convenient processes for the synthesis of 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-one derivatives using easily available starting materials.

On the other hand, oxazoles are of great importance due to their presence in a number of biologically active compounds and pharmaceuticals,<sup>3</sup> such as bengazole A (5) and pimprinine (Scheme 1). They are also versatile synthetic blocks in organic



**Scheme 1** Biologically active natural products containing 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-ones and oxazoles.

synthesis.<sup>4</sup> During the past few decades, numerous outstanding studies to access oxazole molecules have been accomplished.<sup>5,6</sup> Among these synthetic methods, transition metal catalyses with  $\text{Au}$ ,<sup>5a–d</sup>  $\text{Pd}$ ,<sup>5e</sup>  $\text{Ag}$ ,<sup>5f</sup>  $\text{Cu}$ ,<sup>5g–i</sup> and  $\text{Co}$ <sup>7</sup> play a predominant role. For example, in 2011, Davies and co-workers employed conjugated *N*-ylides and ynamides to directly produce highly substituted and functionalized 1,3-oxazoles (Scheme 2, eqn (1)).<sup>5c</sup> In 2012, Jiang and co-workers developed a highly efficient copper-catalyzed aerobic transformation of internal alkynes and nitriles to functionalized 1,3-oxazoles (Scheme 2, eqn (2)).<sup>5i</sup> More recently, Wang's group explored a new method for the synthesis of 5-aminooxazoles by using  $\text{Cp}^*\text{Co}(\text{III})$  as a catalyst (Scheme 2, eqn (3)).<sup>7</sup> However, these procedures are often accompanied by complex metal catalysts, vigorous reaction conditions, and expensive or toxic reagents. Therefore, the development of straightforward and convenient methods for the synthesis of oxazoles is also of great significance and highly pursued in synthetic chemistry.

In this paper, we wish to report our new findings in the synthesis of 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2H)-one and oxazole derivatives from the reaction of easily available *N*-(pivaloyloxy)-amides and ynamides using different metal catalysts (Scheme 2, this work).

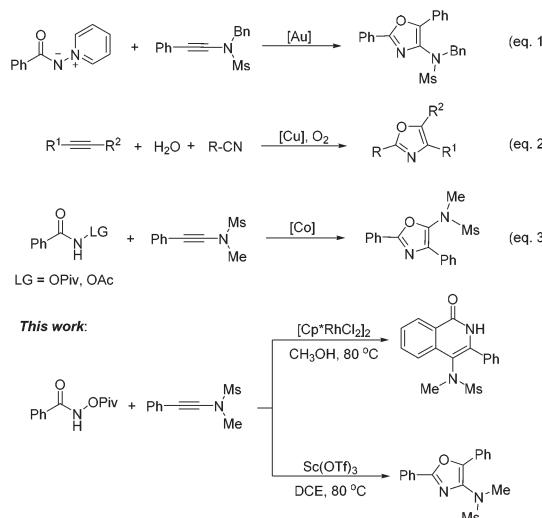
In the past few decades, transition-metal-catalyzed direct C–H bond functionalization has emerged as a powerful tool for the formation of carbon–carbon and carbon–heteroatom bonds.<sup>8</sup> It is a classical reaction pattern that alkenes, alkynes,

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Scheme 2 Approaches for the synthesis of oxazoles.

allenenes or arenes serve as active counterparts to cross-coupling with metallacyclic complexes derived from C–H bond activation to give various functionalized molecules (Fig. 1). We envisioned whether ynamides could be taken as compatible counterparts to directly form 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one frameworks.

To test our hypothesis, we commenced our study with *N*-(pivaloyloxy)benzamide **1a** and *N*-methyl-*N*-(phenylethynyl) methanesulfonamide **2a** in the presence of  $\text{Cp}^*\text{Rh}(\text{iii})$  (2 mol%) and CsOAc (1.0 eq.) in  $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}$  at 80 °C. To our delight, the desired product **3aa** was obtained in 85% yield (Table 1, entry 1). Various bases, such as LiOAc or NaOAc, were tested in the reaction, but they did not further improve the yield (Table 1, entries 2 and 3). Afterwards, we carried out this reaction in different solvents, such as acetonitrile, 1,2-dichloroethane and toluene (Table 1, entries 4–6), but none of the desired product was observed. Other metal catalysts such as  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$ ,  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RuCl}_2]_2$  and  $[(p\text{-cymene})\text{RuCl}_2]_2$  did not catalyze the reaction (Table 1, entries 7–9). When CsF (1.0 eq.) was used as an additive, the reaction also performed very well, giving the desired product **3aa** in 85% yield (Table 1, entry 10). Next, we found that this reaction proceeded more smoothly when PivOH (1.0 eq.) was used as an additive under otherwise identical conditions, affording **3aa** in 87% yield (Table 1, entry 11). Based on the above results, we then performed this reaction at different temperatures, but no better results were obtained (entries 12–15). Therefore, we identified that the reaction should be carried out in MeOH and  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$  should

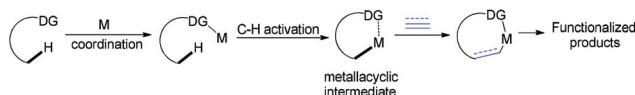
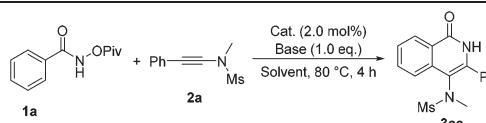


Fig. 1 The general reaction pattern of C–H bond activation with the unsaturated bond.

Table 1 Optimization of the reaction conditions for the synthesis of **3aa**

| Entry <sup>a</sup> | Cat.                                 | Additive | Base  | Solvent | Yield <sup>b</sup> , % |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|-------|---------|------------------------|
| 1                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | —        | CsOAc | MeOH    | 85                     |
| 2                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | —        | LiOAc | MeOH    | 82                     |
| 3                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | —        | NaOAc | MeOH    | 69                     |
| 4                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | —        | CsOAc | DCE     | nr                     |
| 5                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | —        | CsOAc | MeCN    | nr                     |
| 6                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | —        | CsOAc | Toluene | nr                     |
| 7                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$       | —        | CsOAc | MeOH    | nr                     |
| 8                  | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | —        | CsOAc | MeOH    | nr                     |
| 9                  | $[(p\text{-Cymene})\text{RuCl}_2]_2$ | —        | CsOAc | MeOH    | nr                     |
| 10                 | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | CsF      | CsOAc | MeOH    | 85                     |
| 11                 | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | PivOH    | CsOAc | MeOH    | 87                     |
| 12 <sup>c</sup>    | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | PivOH    | CsOAc | MeOH    | 59                     |
| 13 <sup>d</sup>    | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | PivOH    | CsOAc | MeOH    | 67                     |
| 14 <sup>e</sup>    | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | PivOH    | CsOAc | MeOH    | 79                     |
| 15 <sup>f</sup>    | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$       | PivOH    | CsOAc | MeOH    | 73                     |

<sup>a</sup> The reactions were carried out using **1a** (0.2 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), cat. (2.0 mol%), base (1.0 eq.) and solvent (2.0 mL) in a Schlenk tube.

<sup>b</sup> Isolated yields. <sup>c</sup>  $T = \text{RT}$ . <sup>d</sup>  $T = 40^\circ\text{C}$ . <sup>e</sup>  $T = 60^\circ\text{C}$ . <sup>f</sup>  $T = 100^\circ\text{C}$ .

be used as the catalyst with CsOAc as a base in the presence of PivOH (Table 1, entry 11).

Having the optimized reaction conditions in hand, we examined the scope of benzamides bearing diverse substituents on the aromatic ring and the results are shown in Table 2. When the leaving group  $R^2$  is the OPiv anion, we first examined the electronic effect at the *para*-position of the benzene ring. As for substrates **1b**–**1h**, regardless of whether they have electron-rich or electron-poor aromatic rings, the reactions could proceed smoothly to furnish the desired products **3ba**–**3ha** in 61–88% yields. The corresponding disubstituted sub-

Table 2 Substrate scope of benzamides<sup>a</sup>

| <b>1</b>                                 | <b>2a</b>        | $[\text{Cp}^*\text{RhCl}_2]_2$ (2.0 mol%) | CsOAc (1.0 eq.) | PivOH (1.0 eq.) | <b>MeOH, 80 °C, 4 h</b> | <b>3</b>                             |
|--|------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| $R^1 = \text{H}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$      | <b>3aa</b> , 87% |   |                 |                 |                         | $R^1 = \text{H}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$  |
| $R^1 = 4\text{-OMe}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$  | <b>3ba</b> , 71% |   |                 |                 |                         | $R^1 = \text{H}, R^2 = \text{OMe}$   |
| $R^1 = 4\text{-Me}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$   | <b>3ca</b> , 85% |   |                 |                 |                         | $R^1 = \text{H}, R^2 = \text{OFmoc}$ |
| $R^1 = 4\text{-CF}_3, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$ | <b>3da</b> , 61% |   |                 |                 |                         | $R^1 = \text{H}, R^2 = \text{OPh}$   |
| $R^1 = 4\text{-I}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$    | <b>3ea</b> , 81% |   |                 |                 |                         | $R^1 = \text{H}, R^2 = \text{OBz}$   |
| $R^1 = 4\text{-Cl}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$   | <b>3fa</b> , 80% |   |                 |                 |                         | $R^1 = \text{H}, R^2 = \text{OBoc}$  |
| $R^1 = 4\text{-CN}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$   | <b>3ga</b> , 78% |   |                 |                 |                         |                                      |
| $R^1 = 4\text{-NO}_2, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$ | <b>3ha</b> , 88% |   |                 |                 |                         |                                      |
| $R^1 = 3,5\text{-Me}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$ | <b>3ia</b> , 71% |   |                 |                 |                         |                                      |
| $R^1 = 2\text{-Me}, R^2 = \text{OPiv}$   | nr               |   |                 |                 |                         |                                      |
|  |                  |   |                 |                 |                         |                                      |

<sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: **1** (0.2 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol),  $[\text{RhCp}^*\text{Cl}_2]_2$  (2.0 mol%), CsOAc (1.0 eq.) and PivOH (1.0 eq.) in MeOH at 80 °C for 4 h.

Table 3 Substrate scope of ynamides<sup>a</sup>

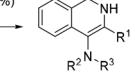
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|   |   | <img alt="Chemical structure of product 3: 2,3-dihydro-1H                           |

Table 6 Substrate scope of ynamides<sup>a</sup>

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
|           |  |  |
| <b>1a</b> | <b>2</b>   | <b>4</b>                               |
|           | <b>2b, R<sup>1</sup> = 4-OMeC<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, R<sup>2</sup> = Ms, R<sub>3</sub> = Me</b> |  |
|           | <b>2c, R<sup>1</sup> = 3-MeC<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, R<sup>2</sup> = Ms, R<sub>3</sub> = Me</b>  |  |
|           | <b>2d, R<sup>1</sup> = 4-FC<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, R<sup>2</sup> = Ms, R<sub>3</sub> = Me</b>   |  |
|           | <b>2e, R<sup>1</sup> = 2-ClC<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, R<sup>2</sup> = Ms, R<sub>3</sub> = Me</b>  |  |
|           | <b>2f, R<sup>1</sup> = C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>, R<sup>2</sup> = Ts, R<sub>3</sub> = Me</b>      |  |
|           | <b>2g, R<sup>1</sup> = 4-OMeC<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, R<sup>2</sup> = Ts, R<sub>3</sub> = Me</b> |  |
|           | <b>2h, R<sup>1</sup> = 3-MeC<sub>6</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, R<sup>2</sup> = Ts, R<sub>3</sub> = Me</b>  |  |
|           |  |  |
|           | <b>R<sup>4</sup> = 4-OMe, 4ab, 66%</b>   | <b>R<sup>5</sup> = H, 4af, 80%</b>     |
|           | <b>R<sup>4</sup> = 3-Me, 4ac, 74%</b>  | <b>R<sup>5</sup> = 4-OMe, 4ag, 74%</b> |
|           | <b>R<sup>4</sup> = 4-F, 4ad, 80%</b>   | <b>R<sup>5</sup> = 3-Me, 4ah, 62%</b>  |
|           | <b>R<sup>4</sup> = 2-Cl, 4ae, 75%</b>  |  |

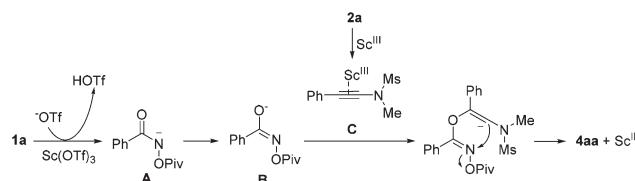
<sup>a</sup>The reactions were carried out using **1a** (0.2 mmol), **2** (1.3 eq.),  $\text{Sc}(\text{OTf})_3$  (0.1 eq.) and DCE (2.0 mL) in a Schlenk tube.

examined the disubstituted and *ortho*-substituted substrates and found that they were well tolerated under the optimal reaction conditions, providing the desired products **4ba** and **4ca** in 65% and 75% yields, respectively. The electronic effect at the *para*-position of the benzene ring was then examined. Regardless of whether they have electron-rich or electron-poor substitution groups, all of the reactions proceeded smoothly to furnish the desired products **4da**–**4fa** in 55–71% yields. The structure of **4aa** has been unambiguously determined by X-ray diffraction and its ORTEP drawing is shown in Table 5.<sup>11</sup> However, benzamides bearing other leaving groups, including OMe, OBz, and OBoc, afforded the corresponding products in poor yields.

Subsequently, the optimized reaction conditions were then challenged with the diversity of ynamides by taking **1a** as the reaction partner (Table 6). First, when  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  were Me and Ms groups, a diversified range of substituents on the benzene ring including both electron-donating and electron-withdrawing groups at the *para*-position were tolerated, giving the corresponding products **4ab** and **4ad** in 66 and 80% yields, respectively. In the case of the *meta*-substituted substrate (3-methyl) or *ortho*-substituted substrate (2-chloro), the reactions also performed very well, providing the corresponding products **4ac** and **4ae** in 74% and 75% yields, respectively. When  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  were tosyl and methyl groups, the desired products **4af**–**4ah** were achieved in 62%–80% yields.

A plausible reaction mechanism for the formation of **4aa** is proposed in Scheme 3. Intermediate **A** is formed upon the treatment of **1a** with  $\text{Sc}(\text{OTf})_3$ , which undergoes an isomerization to give intermediate **B**. The reaction of intermediate **B** with intermediate **C**, generated upon the activation of **2a** with  $\text{Sc}(\text{OTf})_3$ , provides intermediate **D**. Next, the desired product **4aa** is formed through an intramolecular nucleophilic attack along with the release of the OPIV anion.

In summary, we have developed an efficient and convenient synthetic protocol to produce oxazole or 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one derivatives from the reaction of *N*-(pivaloyloxy)-



Scheme 3 A plausible reaction mechanism.

amides with ynamides by employing different metal catalysts. In the presence of  $\text{Cp}^*\text{Rh}(\text{iii})$  catalyst, 4-amino-isoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one derivatives could be produced in good yields under mild reaction conditions. The use of  $\text{Sc}(\text{OTf})_3$  as the catalyst gave oxazole derivatives in good yields. The reaction can be performed with easily available starting materials and exhibits a broad substrate scope along with moderate to good yields and good functional group tolerance.

## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

## Acknowledgements

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time (16 h) was required when the methoxyl group was used as the leaving group.

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