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## Synthesis of lactone-fused pyrroles by ruthenium-catalyzed 1,2-carbon migration-cycloisomerization†

Takuma Watanabe, Yuichiro Mutoh \* and Shinichi Saito \*

A ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerization of 3-amino-4-alkynyl-2H-chromen-2-ones *via* 1,2-carbon migration was developed. Various 1-arylchromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-ones were synthesized in good to excellent yields. The reaction was applied to the formal total synthesis of marine natural products Ningalin B and Lamellarin H. The efficient synthesis of  $\gamma$ -butyrolactone-fused pyrrole derivatives was also achieved.

### Introduction

1-Arylchromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-one skeleton is found in natural products such as Ningalin B, Lamellarin H, and related compounds (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> These alkaloids are isolated from marine organisms and known to exhibit biological activities<sup>1</sup> such as cytotoxicity,<sup>2</sup> MDR reversal activity,<sup>2</sup> HIV-1 integrase inhibition,<sup>3</sup> and antitumor activity.<sup>4</sup> Due to their promising pharmacological potentials, these pyrrole-containing natural products have been synthesized by various strategies over the years.<sup>1,5</sup>

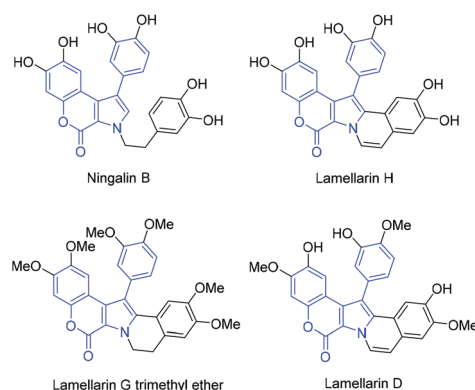
Recent examples for the synthesis of the chromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-one skeleton include palladium-catalyzed cycloisomerization,<sup>6</sup> one-pot multistep synthesis from 4-chloro-3-nitrocoumarin,<sup>7</sup> the functionalization of 2,3-diarylpyrrole,<sup>8</sup> the cyclization of 3-nitrocoumarin and papaverine,<sup>9</sup> and so on. Among these synthetic methods, the palladium-catalyzed cycloisomerization of 3-amino-4-alkynyl-2H-chromen-2-ones is a straightforward and powerful method (Scheme 1a).<sup>6</sup> The reaction proceeds *via* intramolecular nucleophilic amination of the  $\pi$ -activated alkyne, and 2-substituted chromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-ones were isolated.

We have recently developed ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerization reactions that involve the vinylidene rearrangement of internal alkynes by 1,2-carbon migration and cyclization.<sup>10–13</sup> For example, in the presence of a cationic ruthenium catalyst, various 2-alkynylanilides were converted into the 3-substituted indoles in high yields (Scheme 1b).<sup>11</sup> The mode of the reaction is different from other metal-catalyzed cycloisomerization of 2-alkynylanilines, where no 1,2-carbon migration was involved, and 2-substituted indoles were isolated.<sup>14</sup> In that study, we reported one example that 1-phenylchromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-one can be synthesized by

applying the reaction. Considering the importance of the chromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-one skeleton in medicinal chemistry and recent active studies related to the synthesis of Ningalin and Lamellarin derivatives, the development of a new and general method for the synthesis of chromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-one derivatives would be highly desirable. In this paper, we report a ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerization of 3-amino-4-alkynyl-2H-chromen-2-ones that leads to various 1-arylchromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-ones *via* 1,2-carbon migration (Scheme 1c). This new methodology enabled the formal total synthesis of Ningalin B and Lamellarin H. Moreover, we describe the synthesis of rare  $\gamma$ -lactone-fused pyrrole derivatives by a similar ruthenium-catalyzed 1,2-carbon migration/cyclization strategy.

### Results and discussion

We investigated the scope and limitation of the reaction using various 3-amino-4-alkynyl-2H-chromen-2-one derivatives (1, Table 1). As previously reported, when a mixture of

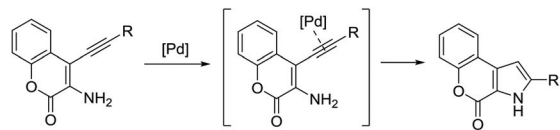


**Fig. 1** Representative natural products and analogue containing 1-arylchromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-one skeleton.

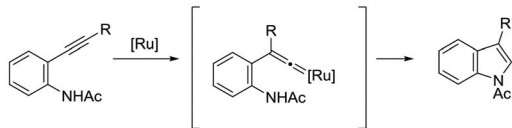
Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science Tokyo University of Science, 1-3 Kagurazaka Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-8601, Japan. E-mail: ymutoh@rs.tus.ac.jp, ssaito@rs.kagu.tus.ac.jp

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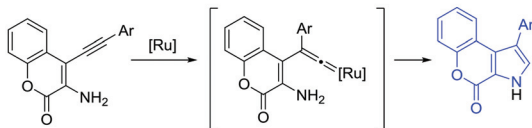


(a) Cycloisomerization via  $\pi$ -activation (non-migration)

(b) Synthesis of indoles by ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerization via 1,2-carbon migration



(c) This work: Synthesis of 1-arylchromeno[3,4-b]pyrrol-4(3H)-one via 1,2-carbon migration

**Scheme 1** Cycloisomerization of 3-amino-4-alkynyl-2H-chromen-2-ones.

aminocoumarin **1a**, [CpRuCl(dppe)] (Cp =  $\eta^5$ -C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub><sup>−</sup>; dppe = Ph<sub>2</sub>PCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>PPh<sub>2</sub>) (5 mol%), and NaBAR<sup>F</sup><sub>4</sub>·3H<sub>2</sub>O (Ar<sup>F</sup> = 3,5-(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>) (6 mol%) was stirred at 145 °C for 2.5 h in chlorobenzene, the desired 1,2-aryl migration product 3-phenylpyrrolocoumarin (**2a**) was formed in 95% yield.<sup>10,15</sup> Isomeric 2-substituted pyrrole was not observed in the reaction mixture. Although the reaction of **1a** at 130 °C completed in 16 h at the same catalyst loading, the yield of **2a** was lower (82%). [IndRuCl(dppe)] (Ind =  $\eta^5$ -C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>7</sub><sup>−</sup>) and [CpFeCl(dppe)] were inactive catalysts for this reaction, and **2a** was not formed.

We studied the impact of the aryl groups bound to the ethynyl group (R<sup>1</sup>) on the reaction. Under the similar reaction conditions described above, 4-methoxyphenyl pyrrole **2b** was obtained in 98% yield with lower catalyst loading. Electron-withdrawing groups were tolerated for this reaction, and pyrrolocoumarins **2c** (92% yield) and **2d** (96% yield) were synthesized in the presence of 10 mol% [CpRuCl(dppe)]. The low reactivity of the alkynes with electron-withdrawing groups (**1c** and **1d**) compared to the substrate with electron-donating group (**1b**) was consistent with our previous studies on the ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerizations *via* 1,2-carbon migration<sup>10,11</sup> and probably attributed to the rates of the formation of the disubstituted ruthenium vinylidene complex.<sup>16</sup> Pyrrolocoumarin **2e** with 3,4-dimethoxyphenyl group was also formed from **1e** in 81% yield. When the reaction of sterically congested aminocoumarin **1f** bearing 1-naphthyl group at the alkyne terminus was examined in the presence of 5 mol% of the ruthenium catalyst, the progress of the reaction was sluggish. In the presence of an increased amount (25 mol%) of [CpRuCl(dppe)], however, the corresponding product **2f** was isolated in 89% yield. The compatibility of the substrates with heteroaryl groups was also evaluated, and 5-indolyl derivative **2g** (96% yield) and thiophen-3-yl derivative **2h** (90% yield) were synthesized cleanly.

**Table 1** Scope of the ruthenium-catalyzed 1,2-carbon migration/cyclization of 3-amino-4-ethynyl-2H-chromen-2-one derivatives (**1**)<sup>a,b</sup>

1a-l	2a-l

<sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: **1** (0.25–0.5 mmol), [**1**]<sup>0</sup> = 0.025–0.2 M in chlorobenzene, [CpRuCl(dppe)] (1–10 mol%), NaBAR<sup>F</sup><sub>4</sub>·3H<sub>2</sub>O (1.2–12 mol%).

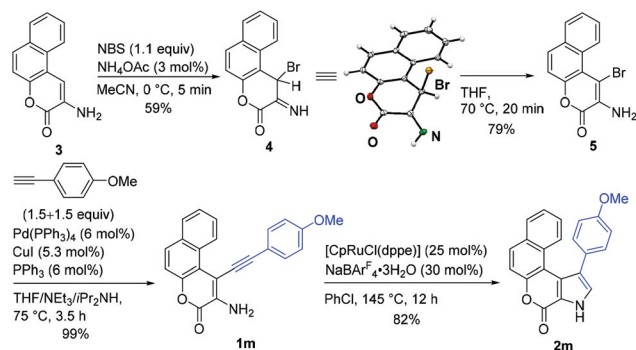
<sup>b</sup> Isolated yields are shown in parentheses except for **1j**.

The scope of the reaction was further studied by introducing non-aromatic substituents as R<sup>1</sup>. The reactivity of benzoyl aminocoumarin **1i** was similar to that of aryl-substituted aminocoumarins, and the corresponding pyrrole **2i** was prepared in 89% yield. The reaction of **1j** (R<sup>1</sup> = Bu) did not proceed, and the starting material was recovered. The low reactivity of **1j** is in contrast to our previous result: the cycloisomerization of a 2-hexynylaniline derivative generated the corresponding 3-butyldindole derivative.<sup>10</sup> The reaction of **1j** in the presence of [CpRuCl(dppbz)] (dppbz = 1,2-bis(diphenylphosphino) benzene), which is a more effective catalyst for the synthesis of alkylated indoles,<sup>10,17</sup> also afforded no desired product. We assume that the decreased rate for the alkyne-to-vinylidene rearrangement of electron-deficient and alkyl-substituted acetylene<sup>16,18</sup> could be the reason for this unsuccessful result.

The effect of the substituents introduced to R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> on the coumarin moiety was explored. A methoxypyrrolocoumarin (**2k**, R<sup>2</sup> = OMe, R<sup>3</sup> = H) as well as a fluoropyrrolocoumarin (**2l**, R<sup>2</sup> = H, R<sup>3</sup> = F) were synthesized in high yields.

We further extended our study to the synthesis of a benzofused pyrrolocoumarin derivative.<sup>19</sup> The synthesis and ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerization of a benzochrome-none derivative **1m** was summarized in Scheme 2. When we

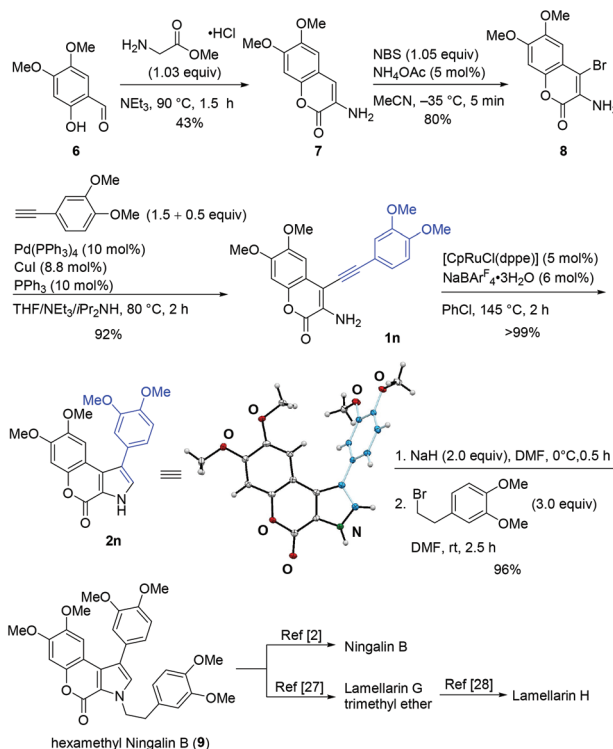
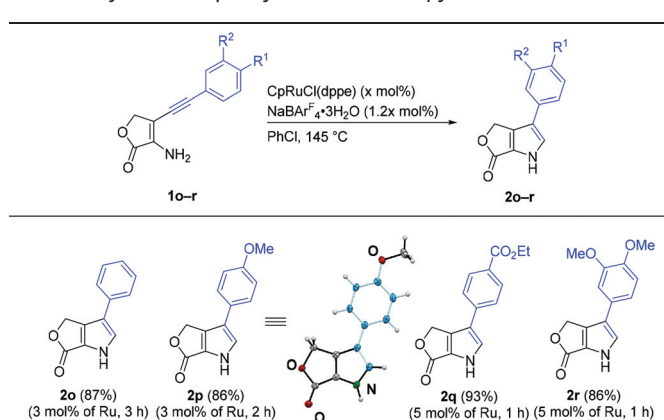


Scheme 2 Preparation of **1m** and the synthesis of **2m**.

tried to synthesize **5** by the bromination of **3**<sup>20</sup> with NBS in the presence of a catalytic amount of  $\text{NH}_4\text{OAc}$  at  $0\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ ,<sup>21</sup> an unexpected product **4** was isolated in 59% yield. Since the corresponding bromide was not isolated in the reaction of the bicyclic 3-amino-2*H*-chromen-2-one under similar reaction conditions,<sup>21</sup> we assume that the presence of the C–H bond in the proximity of the bromine atom inhibited the isomerization reaction of **4** at  $0\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ . Due to the steric hindrance, the rate of the conversion of **4** to **5** should be lower compared to those of other aminocoumarins. The isomerization of **4** smoothly proceeded at elevated temperature ( $70\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ ), and compound **5** was isolated in 79% yield. Subsequently, **1m** was synthesized in 99% yield by Sonogashira reaction of **5** with 4-methoxyphenylacetylene under modified Stoddart's conditions.<sup>22</sup> The reactivity of **1m** was similar to that of sterically congested substrate **1f**: the desired product **2m** was isolated in 82% yield when a larger amount (25 mol%) of the catalyst was employed.

Next, we applied this reaction to the formal total synthesis of Ningalin B and Lamellarin H (Scheme 3). When **6**<sup>23,24</sup> was treated with methyl aminoacetate hydrochloride,<sup>25</sup> aminocoumarin **7** was obtained in 43% yield. The bromination of **7** proceeded at  $-35\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  to afford **8** in 80% yield. No  $\alpha$ -bromoimine, which was similar to **4**, was isolated. Compound **1n** was synthesized in 92% yield by Sonogashira reaction. To our delight, **2n** was obtained in quantitative yield in the presence of 5 mol% of the ruthenium catalyst. The structure of **2n** was confirmed by an X-ray diffraction analysis.<sup>26</sup> With the key intermediate (**2n**) in hand, hexamethyl Ningalin B (**9**) was synthesized in 96% yield by alkylation of **2n**.<sup>7</sup> The demethylation of **9** to Ningalin B was reported by Boger and co-workers.<sup>2</sup> Compound **9** is also the intermediate of Lamellarins, and the conversion of **9** into Lamellarin G trimethyl ether<sup>27</sup> and subsequent transformation to Lamellarin H were reported.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, we achieved the formal total synthesis of natural products, Ningalin B and Lamellarin H.

Furthermore, we examined the synthesis of  $\gamma$ -butyrolactone-fused pyrroles to exemplify the application of this reaction (Table 2). In spite of the simplicity of the structure, only a couple of  $\gamma$ -butyrolactone-fused pyrroles has been reported in the literature,<sup>29,30</sup> and a general method for the synthesis of these compounds has not been established. We successfully

Scheme 3 Synthesis of the key intermediate **2n** for the synthesis of bioactive compounds.Table 2 Synthesis of  $\gamma$ -butyrolactone-fused pyrrole derivatives<sup>a,b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: **1** (0.25–0.4 mmol),  $[\mathbf{1}]^0 = 0.1\text{--}0.2\text{ M}$  in chlorobenzene,  $[\text{CpRuCl}(\text{dppe})]$  (3–5 mol%),  $\text{NaBARF}_4 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (3.6–6.0 mol%).

<sup>b</sup> Isolated yields are shown in parentheses.

synthesized a series of  $\gamma$ -butyrolactone-fused pyrroles by the ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerization of 3-amino-4-arylethynylfuranones. Under the established reaction conditions described for the reaction of 3-amino-4-alkynyl-2*H*-chromen-2-one, the desired  $\gamma$ -butyrolactone-fused pyrroles **2o** and **2p** were isolated in 87% and 86% yields, respectively. The molecular structure of **2p** was confirmed by a single-crystal X-ray diffraction analysis. The reaction of aminobutenolide **1q** with an



ethoxycarbonyl group also afford the corresponding pyrrole **2q** in high yield. The reaction of **1r** with 3,4-dimethoxyphenyl group proceeded cleanly, and **2r** was obtained in 86% yield.

## Conclusions

We have developed a synthetic method for various 1-arylchromeno[3,4-*b*]pyrrol-4(3*H*)-ones by ruthenium-catalyzed cycloisomerization of 3-amino-4-ethynyl-2*H*-chromen-2-ones via 1,2-carbon migration. The formal total synthesis of Ningalin B and Lamellarin H was achieved by employing this reaction. Moreover, a general method for the synthesis of uncommon  $\gamma$ -butyrolactone-fused pyrroles was established. Our studies will contribute to the development of a new method for the synthesis of heavily substituted pyrrole derivatives.

## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

## Acknowledgements

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- It has been reported that the rate of the 1,2-carbon migration decreases in the reaction of an electron-deficient aromatic alkyne or an aliphatic alkyne. See, ref. 13*d* and *f*.
- The importance of dppbz ligand is unclear at this stage.





- 18 Compared to phenylacetylene, 4-alkynylchromen-2-one would be an electron-deficient alkyne.
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- 20 For details, see the ESI.†
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