

Iodine-Catalyzed Cyclization-Allylation of *N*-Allyl-2-alkynylanilines via Iodocyclization-Rearrangement-Deiodination Sequence

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ARTICLE

Iodine-catalyzed cyclization-allylation of *N*-allyl-2-alkynylanilines via iodocyclization-rearrangement-deiodination sequence[†]Sae Tsubata,^a Akira Tsubouchi,^a and Akio Saito^{*a}Received 00th January 20xx,
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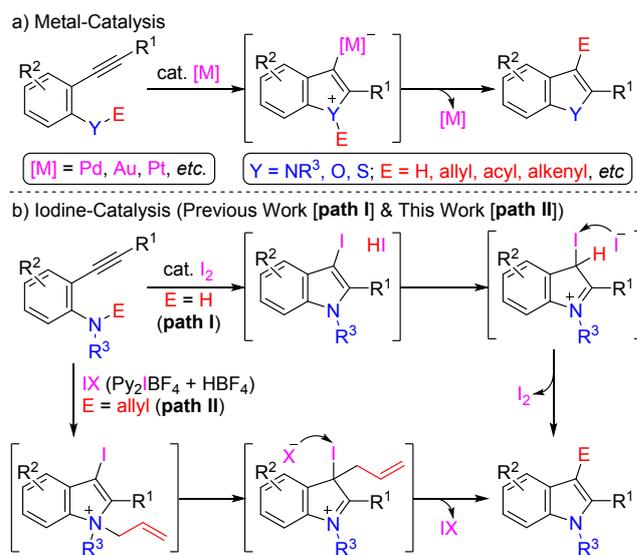
From the viewpoint of green and sustainable chemistry, metal-free cyclization-functionalization reactions of *o*-alkynylanilines methods have been developed recently. However, the applicable substrates are limited because these methods require different activation modes from those by transition metal catalysts. Herein, we report a metal-free cyclization-allylation reaction of *o*-alkynylanilines catalyzed by iodine(I) species via carbo-deiodination of iodocyclized intermediates involving rearrangement of allyl groups, which is the similar mechanism to transition metal-catalysis. This method represents the first iodine-catalysis via carbo-deiodination with rearrangement of functional groups.

Introduction

Since indoles are heterocycles widely found in nature and widely applied in chemistry, biology, and materials science, a variety of methods for the construction of indoles have been developed.¹ Among them, the transition metal-catalyzed cyclization of *o*-alkynylanilines provides one of the facile and powerful synthetic methods of substituted indoles. The catalytic reaction generally proceeds via the activation of triple bond by π -acidic metal complexes and the subsequent protodemetalation of cyclized intermediates (Scheme 1a, Y = NR, E = H).² This method can be applied to cyclization-functionalization reactions of *N,N*-disubstituted *o*-alkynylanilines, which produce indoles with the migration of various substituents on the nitrogen to the 3-position (Y = NR, E = allyl,³ acyl,⁴ alkenyl,⁵ etc^{6,7}), as well as the reactions of the oxygen^{3b,g,5b} and sulfur analogues (Y = O and S).⁸ Recently, the metal-free reactions of *N,N*-disubstituted *o*-alkynylanilines with the 1,3-migration of carbon-based functional groups have been developed from the viewpoint of green and sustainable chemistry.⁹ However, the applicable substrates are limited because these methods are triggered by the interaction of tetrabutylammonium fluoride catalyst with silyl group,^{9a} acid-mediated enamine to iminium ion conversion^{9b} or radical addition to ynamides.^{9c} Thus, the metal-free cyclization-functionalization reactions of *N,N*-disubstituted *o*-alkynylanilines remains challenging.

In recent years, iodine-based catalysts have gained increasing popularity in metal-free transformation reactions due to their benefits such as low toxicity, inexpensiveness and transition-

metal-like reactivity. In addition to hypervalent iodine¹⁰ and (hypo)iodite catalysts¹¹ *in situ* generated from iodine-based precatalysts and oxidants, these catalysts include halogen-bonding-based catalysts as a σ -electrophilic Lewis acid¹² and activation catalysts for the donor of functional groups.¹³

Scheme 1. Cyclization of *o*-alkynylanilines.

On the other hand, as part of our research on the synthesis of heterocycles through the activation of alkynes by iodine-based catalyst,¹⁴ we recently reported a molecular iodine-catalyzed cyclization of *o*-alkynylanilines (Scheme 1b, path I).^{14d} In this reaction, molecular iodine promotes the iodocyclization of the substrates and then the byproduct HI causes protodeiodination of the iodocyclized intermediates, thereby giving rise to indoles along with the regeneration of molecular iodine. However, such an iodine catalysis including redox processes

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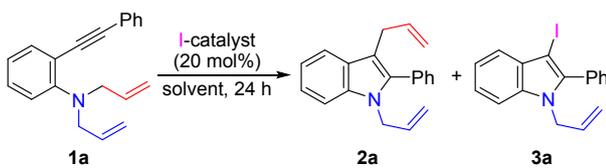
[†]Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI) available: experimental procedures, characterisation data for new compounds. For ESI or other electronic format see DOI: 10.1039/x0xx00000x

without any terminal oxidants are very rare examples.¹⁵ Moreover, although iodine-mediated cyclization reactions of *o*-alkynylanilines via carbo-deiodination processes have been known,¹⁶ the catalytic method for these reactions have not been achieved. Herein, we report a metal-free cyclization-allylation reaction of *o*-alkynylanilines catalyzed by iodine(I) species *in situ* derived from Barluenga's reagent (Py₂IBF₄, Py = pyridine) and HBF₄·OEt₂,¹⁷ in which iodocyclized intermediates would undergo carbo-deiodination involving rearrangement of allyl groups (Scheme 1b, path II).

Results and discussion

Based on the molecular iodine-catalyzed cyclization of *o*-alkynylanilines (Scheme 1b, path I),^{14d} iodine catalysts were initially evaluated in the formation of 3-allylindole **2a** from *N,N*-diallyl-*o*-alkynylaniline **1a** (Table 1). We envisioned that the iodine catalyst would cause the iodocyclization of **1a** to produce **2a** along with the regeneration of the iodine catalyst via the aza-Claisen rearrangement reaction and subsequent deiodination (Scheme 1b, path II).

Table 1. Optimization of conditions.



| Entry | Catalyst | Solvent | (°C) | Yields ^a or recovery ^a (%) | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------|--|-----------------|-----------|
| | | | | 2a | 3a | 1a |
| 1 | I ₂ | MeNO ₂ | 60 | 41 | 4 | 6 |
| 2 | NIS | MeNO ₂ | 60 | 33 | ND ^b | 49 |
| 3 | ICl | MeNO ₂ | 60 | 48 | trace | 0 |
| 4 | Py ₂ IBF ₄ | MeNO ₂ | 60 | 50 | trace | 0 |
| 5 ^c | Py ₂ IBF ₄ | MeNO ₂ | 40 | 69 | 6 | 0 |
| 6 ^c | Py ₂ IBF ₄ | MeCN | 40 | 38 | 4 | 42 |
| 7 ^{c,d} | Py ₂ IBF ₄ | MeCN | 40 | 66 | 5 | 9 |
| 8 ^c | Py ₂ IBF ₄ | DCE | 40 | 45 | 5 | 44 |
| 9 ^{c,d} | Py ₂ IBF ₄ | DCM | 40 | 40 | 4 | 30 |
| 10 ^e | Py ₂ IBF ₄ | DCM | 40 | 54 ^f | 10 | 19 |

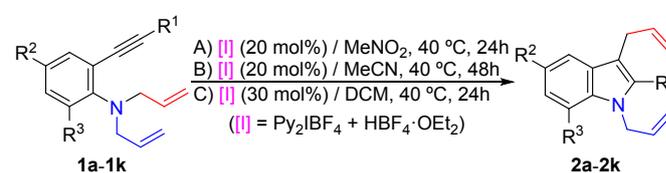
^a Determined by ¹H NMR analysis using an internal standard. ^b Not determined. ^c Additive: HBF₄·OEt₂ (20 mol%). ^d Time: 48 h. ^e Py₂IBF₄ and HBF₄·OEt₂: 30 mol% each. ^f Isolated yield: 53%.

As expected, **1a** was treated with molecular iodine (20 mol%) in MeNO₂ to give the desired **2a** (41%) at 60 °C for 24 h (Table 1, entry 1). However, *N*-iodosuccinimide (NIS) resulted in a lower yield of **2a** (33%) and a significant recovery of **1a** (49%) probably due to the relatively high nucleophilicity of the succinimide anion, which promotes the deallylation reaction of the iodocyclized intermediate before the aza-Claisen rearrangement reaction. Hence, ICl and Barluenga's reagent having lower nucleophilic counter anions gave relatively good results (entries 3 and 4). Furthermore, Barluenga's reagent pretreated with HBF₄·OEt₂¹⁷ improved the yield of **2a** up to 69% at 40 °C (entry 5). Among the attempted solvent (entries 5-10

and ESI), MeCN gave the similar result (**2a**: 66%) to MeNO₂ albeit taking for 48 h (entry 7). Unfortunately, the obtained **2a** was difficult to separate from a byproduct of undetermined structure. On the other hand, the formation of the byproduct was not observed in DCM (entry 8). Therefore, we examined the conditions thoroughly in DCM and found that it was better to increase the amount of catalyst (entry 10) rather than to extend the reaction time (entry 9). When 30 mol% of catalyst was used in DCM, **2a** was isolated in 53% yield (entry 10).

Next, the cyclization-allylation reactions of *o*-alkynylanilines **1** were investigated using iodine species (20-30 mol%) generated from Barluenga's reagent and HBF₄·OEt₂ in MeNO₂ (method **A**), MeCN (method **B**) or DCM (method **C**), which gave relatively good results. As shown in Table 2, method **C** was found to show equal or better results than methods **A** and **B** in some cases (**1b**, **1d**, **1f** and **1i-1k**) as well as to allow the proper purification of **2** in all cases.

Table 2. Effect of substituents on alkynes or aromatic rings.



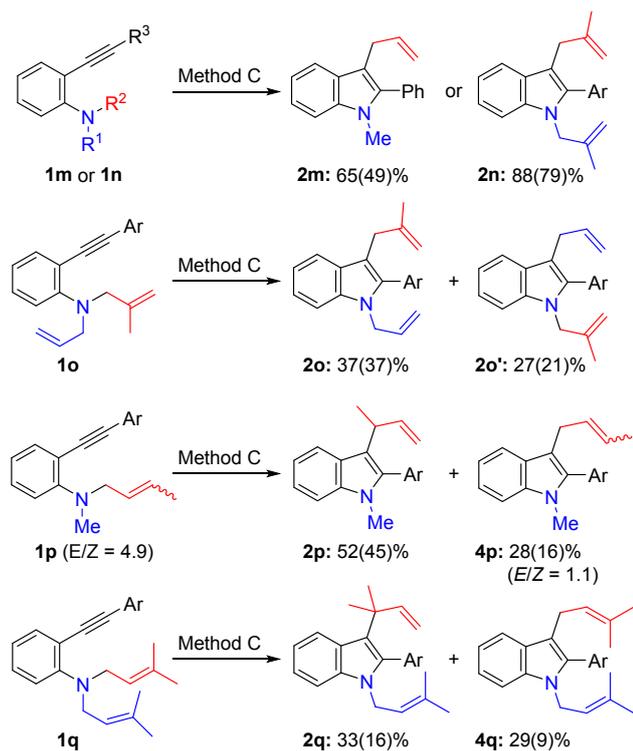
| 1 | R ¹ | R ² | R ³ | 2 ^a (%) | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|----------|
| | | | | A | B | C |
| 1a | Ph | H | H | 69 | 66 | 54 (53) |
| 1b | 4-MeC ₆ H ₄ | H | H | 63 | 69 | 68 (58) |
| 1c | 4-MeOC ₆ H ₄ | H | H | 73 | 82 | 71 (60) |
| 1d | 4-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄ | H | H | 27 | 33 | 35 (31) |
| 1e | 4-ClC ₆ H ₄ | H | H | 66 | 59 | 39 (39) |
| 1f | 3-ClC ₆ H ₄ | H | H | 35 | 32 | 36 (26) |
| 1g | 2-ClC ₆ H ₄ | H | H | <5 | <5 | <5 |
| 1h | 2-MeOC ₆ H ₄ | H | H | 74 | 87 | 77 (58) |
| 1i | ⁿ Bu | H | H | 74 | 75 | 87 (62) |
| 1j | ⁱ Pr | H | H | 66 | 62 | 65 (47) |
| 1k | Ph | Me | H | 64 | 56 | 64 (61) |
| 1l | Ph | Me | Me | ND ^b | 75 | 90 (67) |

^a Determined by ¹H NMR analysis using an internal standard. Values in parentheses show isolated yields. ^b Not determined.

Among the attempted substrates with various substituents of the alkynes (Table 2), the electron-rich aryl-substituted **1b**, **1c**, **1h** and the alkyl-substituted **1i**, **1j** afforded the corresponding products in good yields. On the other hand, in cases of the electron-deficient aryl-substituted **1d-1g**, the product yields were relatively low. Particularly, the *o*-chlorophenyl-substituted **1g** was hardly converted into **2g**. In addition, the ^tBu-substituted substrate gave a complex mixture. Thus, it is suggested that the present reaction is greatly affected by steric factors as well as the electron density of the alkynes. It should be mentioned that **2k** and **2l** having substituents at the *ortho*- and *para*-positions of aniline moiety were formed in good yields.

As for the migration ability of the substituents on nitrogen of *o*-alkynylanilines **1m-1q** (Scheme 2), allyl and crotyl groups underwent the rearrangement prior to methyl group, as in

products **2m** and **2p**. However, the rearrangement of allyl groups competed with that of methallyl group, as in products **2o** and **2o'**. Note that, in the case of methallyl group, the desired products were obtained from the 4-methoxyphenyl-substituted *o*-alkynylanilines **1n** and **1o**, which have a high electron density in the alkyne moiety, while the corresponding phenyl compounds were not converted at all. These results imply that iodine species would probably undergo competitive coordination of alkyne and alkene to retard the iodocyclization step. Interestingly, the reactions of crotyl compound **1p** and prenyl compound **1q** produced [1,3] adducts **4p** and **4q** along with [3,3] adducts **2p** and **2q**.

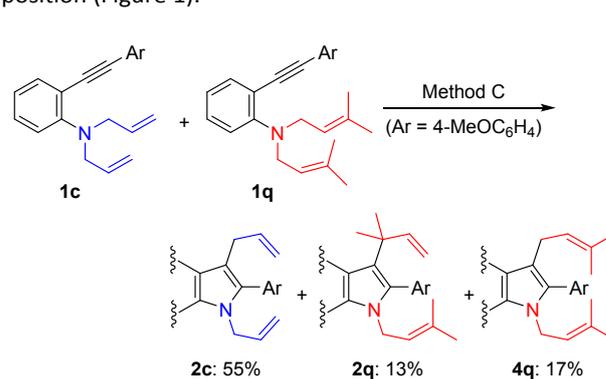


Scheme 2. Effect of substituents on nitrogen (Ar = 4-MeOC₆H₄, Values in parentheses show isolated yields).

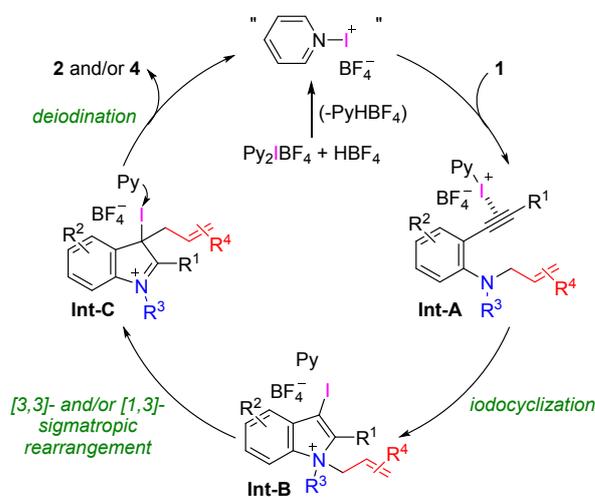
To obtain mechanistic insight into the migration process of allyl groups, we attempted crossover experiments using **1c** and **1q**. As shown in Scheme 3, a 1:1 mixture of **1c** and **1q** was treated with the iodine species (30 mol% based on total amount of **1c** and **1q**) generated from Barluenga's reagent and HBF₄·OEt₂ in DCM (method C) to give **2c**, **2q** and **4q** in 55% (based on amount of **1c**), 13% and 17% (based on amount of **1q**) yields, respectively. Notably, the molecular ion peak (*m/z*: 331.19) of the crossover products was not detected even in the GC-MS analysis of the above reaction mixture. Thus, the migration of allyl groups was suggested to be the intramolecular reaction.

On the basis of the above results and previous reports of iodine-mediated/catalyzed cyclization of *o*-alkynylanilines,^{14d,15-17} a proposed mechanism for the iodine(I)-catalyzed cyclization-

allylation reactions of *o*-alkynylanilines **1** is shown in Scheme 4. Initially, the generated iodine catalyst "PyIBF₄" derived from Barluenga's reagent and HBF₄·OEt₂ activates the triple bond of **1** (INT-A) to form an iodocyclized intermediate INT-B. And then, INT-B is converted into INT-C via [3,3]- and/or [1,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement reactions. Finally, deiodination of INT-C with pyridine (and/or BF₄⁻ anion) afford the products **2** and/or **4** along with the regeneration of the iodine catalyst. When the γ -position of the allyl group, such as the crotyl or prenyl group, is relatively bulky, the [1,3] rearrangement of the tight iodinated indole-allyl cation complex¹⁸ is expected to proceed along with the [3,3] rearrangement due to steric hindrance with the indole 3-position (Figure 1).



Scheme 3. Crossover experiments using **1c** and **1q**.



Scheme 4. Proposed mechanism.

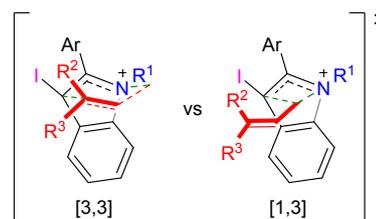


Figure 1. [3,3]- and/or [1,3]-sigmatropic rearrangement of **1p** or **1q** (Ar = 4-MeOC₆H₄; R¹ = Me or CH₂CH=CMe₂; R², R³ = Me or H).

Conclusions

In conclusion, we have developed a metal-free cyclization-allylation reaction of *o*-alkynylanilines catalyzed by iodine(I) species *in situ* derived from Barluenga's reagent and HBF₄·OEt₂. On the basis of experimental data including control experiments, we proposed that the reaction proceeds via iodocyclization of the substrates followed by [3,3] and [1,3] sigmatropic rearrangement of cyclized intermediates. This work represents the first report of iodine-catalysis via carbo-deiodination with rearrangement of functional groups, and provides the metal-free and powerful method for the construction of indole skeleton with introduction of allylic functional groups. Studies on other cyclization-functionalization of *o*-alkynylanilines and their analogues catalyzed by iodine species are underway.

Experimental

Representative procedure for conversion of **1a** into **2a**.

After Barluenga's reagent (55.9 mg, 0.15 mmol) was treated with HBF₄·OEt₂ (24.4 mg, 0.15 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (1.3 mL) at 0 °C for 15 min, a solution of **1a** (137.5 mg, 0.5 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (2.5 mL) was added at 0 °C. After being stirred at 40 °C for 24 h, the reaction mixture was quenched with sat. NaHCO₃ aq. and 20 wt% Na₂S₂O₃ aq., and extracted with AcOEt. The organic layer was dried over MgSO₄ and concentrated *in vacuo* to dryness. The yield of **2a** was determined to be 59% by ¹H NMR analysis of the residue using MeCN as an internal standard. Then, the residue was purified by medium pressure liquid chromatography (MPLC) on silica gel modified with amino groups (hexane only) and by MPLC on silica gel modified with octadecylsilyl (ODS) groups (MeCN:H₂O = 9:1) in turn to give **2a** (72.9 mg, 53%).

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, A.S.; data curation, all; formal analysis, all; funding acquisition, A.S.; investigation, S.T. and A.T.; methodology, S.T. and A.T.; project administration, A.S.; resources, A.S.; supervision, A.S.; validation, S.T. and A.T.; visualization, S.T. and A.T.; writing—original draft preparation, A.S.; writing—review and editing, A.T. and A.S.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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