



### Radical-mediated remote migration of quinoxalinones†

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Cite this: *Chem. Commun.*, 2023, 59, 4499

Received 18th December 2022,  
Accepted 20th March 2023

DOI: 10.1039/d2cc06887g

rsc.li/chemcomm

Disclosed herein is the first example of radical-mediated remote migration of quinoxalinones. The quinoxalinonyl-functionalization of alkenes employs the quinoxalinone-substituted tertiary bishomoallylic alcohols as substrates, proceeds through intramolecular 1,4-quinoxalinone migration, and gives rise to complex  $\gamma$ -quinoxalinone-substituted aliphatic ketones. A set of external radicals is compatible with this method. The protocol features broad tolerance of functional groups, good adaptability to various external radicals and high product diversity, and opens a new door for the synthesis of quinoxalinone derivatives.

Nitrogen-containing heteroarenes are extensively present in natural products and drug molecules,<sup>1</sup> among which quinoxalinone often serves as the pharmacophore of bioactive compounds. For instance, they are widely exploited in anti-tumour and anti-bacteria agents, HIV-1 reverse transcriptase inhibitors, anticoagulants, and hypoglycaemic agents (Scheme 1A).<sup>2</sup> In view of broad prospects in application, the preparation of quinoxalinone derivatives has attracted great attention over the past few years.<sup>3</sup> The most common approaches rely on the Minisci reaction by adding various alkyl radicals to the parent quinoxalinone.<sup>4</sup> Alkenes are easily available and can act as the precursor of alkyl radicals that engage in the Minisci reaction.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, this approach is generally limited to activated alkenes, in particular styrene derivatives which only generate benzyl radicals in the reaction.

Remote functional group migration (FGM) provides an efficient strategy for the transformations of unactivated alkenes.<sup>6</sup> We

and others have comprehensively investigated the FGM reactions, where a portfolio of functional groups including aryls,<sup>7</sup> heteroaryls,<sup>8</sup> cyano,<sup>9</sup> alkynyl,<sup>10</sup> alkenyl,<sup>11</sup> oximino,<sup>12</sup> and carbonyl,<sup>12a,13</sup> showcase excellent migratory aptitudes (Scheme 1B). We conceive to study the migration of quinoxalinones and apply it to the construction of complex quinoxalinone derivatives. While the migration of several azaarenes, such as (benzo)thiazole, (benz)oxazole, (benz)imidazole, pyridine, quinoline, and pyrimidine, has been well established, the migrating behavior of quinoxalinone remains unaddressed.

Herein, we provide proof-of-principle studies for radical-mediated remote migration of quinoxalinones (Scheme 1C). The transformation employs strategically designed quinoxalinone-substituted tertiary bishomoallylic alcohols as substrates, which are conveniently accessed in two steps, the Minisci-type reaction

#### A. Bioactive molecules containing quinoxalinone moiety



#### B. State-of-the-art of remote functional group migration



#### C. This work: remote migration of quinoxalinones



Scheme 1 Importance of quinoxalinone derivatives and the preparation via remote migration of quinoxalinone.

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† Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available. See DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1039/d2cc06887g>

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Other types of external radicals instead of sulfonyl radicals that triggered the migration reaction were explored, to assess the generality of the protocol (Scheme 3). Trifluoromethyl radicals derived from Togni's reagent in the presence of catalytic CuI readily added to the substrates, leading to the trifluoromethylation products in modest to high yields (Schemes 3A, 3a–3f). Likewise, changing the substitution of tertiary alcohols **1** did not impede the desired transformations. The reaction of **1a** with difluoroalkyl and monofluoroalkyl radicals generated under photochemical conditions smoothly proceeded to give the corresponding products in good yields



**Scheme 3** Assessment of external radicals. (A) Reaction conditions: **1** (0.2 mmol), Togni's reagent II (0.4 mmol, 2.0 equiv.), CuI (20 mol %) in  $\text{CHCl}_3$  (2.0 mL) at rt under  $\text{N}_2$ . Yields of isolated products are given. (B) **1a** (0.2 mmol),  $\text{BrCF}_2\text{R}$  or  $\text{BrCHFRR}$  (0.4 mmol, 2.0 equiv.), *fac*- $\text{Ir}(\text{ppy})_3$  (3 mol %) and  $\text{K}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.2 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$  (2.0 mL) were irradiated with 30 W blue LEDs at rt under  $\text{N}_2$ . (C) **1a** (0.2 mmol),  $\text{TMSN}_3$  (0.8 mmol, 4.0 equiv.) and PIFA (0.4 mmol, 2 equiv.) in  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$  (2.0 mL) at rt under  $\text{N}_2$ . (D) (a) **1a** (0.2 mmol),  $\text{TsNHNH}_2$  (0.3 mmol, 1.5 equiv.), NaI (0.1 mmol, 50 mol %), and TBHP (0.5 mmol, 2.5 equiv.) in  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$  (2.0 mL) at rt under  $\text{N}_2$ . (b) **1a** (0.2 mmol), TsNa (0.4 mmol, 2.0 equiv.) and  $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_8$  (0.6 mmol, 3.0 equiv.) in  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}/\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (2.0/0.2 mL) at 60 °C under  $\text{N}_2$ .



**Scheme 4** Product transformations.

(Schemes 3B, 4a and 4b). Moreover, the reaction of **1a** with azido radicals furnished the azidation product in a useful yield (Scheme 3C, 5). Other sulfonyl radical precursors such as  $\text{TsNHNH}_2$  and  $\text{TsNa}$  were also suitable for the radical sulfonylation, giving rise to product **2a**, respectively (Scheme 3D).

The utility of this method was further manifested by converting the product to other valuable molecules. For instance, ketone product **2w** could be transformed into ester **6** by Baeyer–Villiger oxidation (Scheme 4A). The treatment of quinoxalinone with  $\text{POCl}_3$  resulted in 2-chloroquinoxaline **7**, which was subject to Sonogashira coupling to afford the complex alkyne product **8** (Scheme 4B).

The chain length of tertiary alcohols was investigated to probe the preferable transition state of the migrating step (Scheme 5A). While the reaction of **9** ( $n = 0$ ) and **10** ( $n = 1$ ) did not provide satisfactory outcomes, the conversion of **11** ( $n = 3$ ) to product **14** delivered a high yield similar to that of **1a**. These results suggested that 1,4- or 1,5-migration of quinoxalinones



**Scheme 5** Proposed reaction mechanism.

readily proceeded *via* a kinetically favored five- or six-membered transition state.

On the basis of the experimental results, a plausible mechanism is depicted in Scheme 5B. Firstly, the transition of Ir(III) species to the excited state is enabled by visible-light irradiation, and generates a sulfonyl radical from sulfonyl chloride and Ir(IV) species *via* SET. Adding the sulfonyl radical to **1** gives rise to alkyl radical **a**, which undergoes intramolecular cyclization of quinoxalinone to generate a spiro intermediate **b**. The subsequent *N*-centered radical promoted ring opening accomplishes the 1,4-migration of quinoxalinone, and results in ketyl radical **d**. Single-electron oxidation of **c** to cation **d** by Ir(IV) species followed by deprotonation furnishes final product **2**, and regenerates Ir(III) species to perpetuate the photoredox catalytic cycle.

In summary, we have disclosed the radical-mediated remote migration of quinoxalinones for the first time. It presents a new supplement to the precedent examples of functional group migration. The reaction proceeds through intramolecular 1,4-quinoxalinone migration, leading to a variety of complex  $\gamma$ -quinoxalinone-substituted aliphatic ketones in synthetically useful yields. The protocol features wide tolerance of functional groups, good adaptability to external radicals and high product diversity, and opens a new door for the synthesis of quinoxalinone derivatives.

We are grateful for the financial support from the National Natural Science Foundation of China (Grant no. 22171201, 22001185, 21971173), the Natural Science Foundation of Jiangsu Province (BK20200852), the Project of Scientific and Technologic Infrastructure of Suzhou (SZS201905), and the Priority Academic Program Development of Jiangsu Higher Education Institutions (PAPD).

## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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