

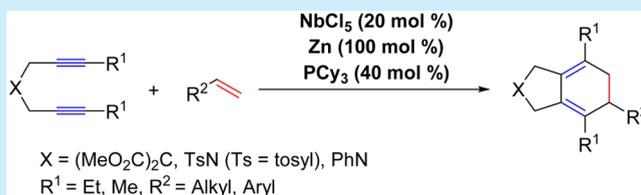
NbCl₅/Zn/PCy₃-System-Catalyzed Intramolecular [2 + 2 + 2] Cycloadditions of Diynes and Alkenes To Form Bicyclic Cyclohexadienes

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S Supporting Information

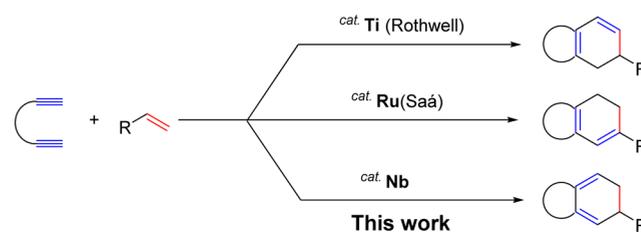
ABSTRACT: A NbCl₅, Zn, and PCy₃ catalytic system that generated low-valent Nb species is used for the synthesis of bicyclic cyclohexadienes from diynes and simple alkenes. A phosphine ligand is important for stabilizing low-valent Nb in the cycloaddition. The bicyclic cyclohexadiene skeleton is important in transition-metal-catalyzed intramolecular cycloadditions.



Low-valent early transition metals are efficient in organic syntheses because of their electron-rich and Lewis acidic properties;¹ for example, Ti–alkyne complexes react with ketones to give allyl alcohols^{1a} and Zr–alkyne complexes produce benzene derivatives.^{1b,e–h} However, these low-valent species need to be generated at low temperatures (–78 to 0 °C). Low-valent Nb species have greater thermal stability than other early transition-metal species and can be used in organic syntheses under ambient conditions.² Previously, we reported the Nb-mediated synthesis of indenenes from aliphatic ketones and aromatic internal alkynes.³ We also reported Nb–alkyne complex mediated coupling reactions of aryl iodides.⁴ Recently, the use of early transition metals in many catalytic organic reactions, e.g., cycloaddition,⁵ reductive coupling,⁶ and C–H bond activation,⁷ have been reported. We previously developed Nb-catalyzed intermolecular [2 + 2 + 2] cycloadditions of alkynes with alkenes or nitriles and isocyanates.^{8,9} In these reactions, Nb-catalyzed cycloadditions of alkynes and alkenes produce cyclohexadienes with high chemo- and regioselectivities.^{8,9a} A few examples of transition-metal-catalyzed intermolecular cycloadditions to give cyclohexadienes have been reported.¹⁰

The selectivities of transition-metal-catalyzed intramolecular cycloadditions are easier to control than those of intermolecular cycloadditions.¹¹ However, the chemo- and regioselective preparation of bicyclic cyclohexadienes from diynes and alkenes is difficult because cyclohexadiene aromatization or double-bond migration can occur.¹² Enynes and alkynes¹³ or diynes and cyclic alkenes^{12b,14} are used for transition-metal-catalyzed syntheses of bicyclic cyclohexadienes to prevent these processes. Rothwell^{5a} and Saá^{14a,b} reported the formation of bicyclic cyclohexadienes from diynes and terminal alkenes using Ti and Ru catalysts, respectively. These cyclohexadiene skeletons are formed via double-bond migration (Scheme 1). There are some reports on intramolecular cycloaddition of

Scheme 1. Synthesis of Bicyclic Hexadiene Derivatives from Diynes and Terminal Alkenes



diynes and terminal alkenes for preparing bicyclic cyclohexadienes without double-bond migration. For example, Ni-catalyzed reaction of diynes and α,β -enones^{12a} and Ti-mediated reaction of diynes and homoallylic alcohols^{1c} were reported. Therefore, to the best of our knowledge, there is no report of selective synthesis of bicyclic cyclohexadienes from intramolecular [2 + 2 + 2] cycloaddition between diynes and simple alkenes, such as aliphatic- and aromatic alkenes, without double-bond migration.

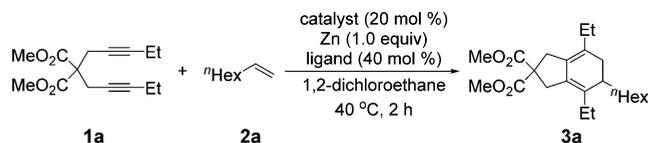
In this paper, we report the intramolecular [2 + 2 + 2] cycloaddition of diynes and simple alkenes catalyzed by low-valent Nb species formed from NbCl₅/Zn/tricyclohexylphosphine (PCy₃) to give bicyclic cyclohexadienes in high yields and with high selectivities, without C=C bond migration (Scheme 1). In this reaction, the phosphine ligand significantly affects the cycloaddition. Ti–phosphine catalysts have been used in organic synthesis,¹⁵ but this is the first reported example of the use of a Nb–phosphine catalyst in organic synthesis.

Initially, dimethyl 2,2-di(pent-2-ynyl)malonate (**1a**) and 1-octene (**2a**) were used as model substrates for optimization of

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the cycloaddition reaction conditions; the results are shown in Table 1. We investigated various phosphine ligands. When **1a**

Table 1. NbCl₅/Zn/PCy₃-Catalyzed Reaction of Diyne **1a** with 1-Octene (**2a**) under Various Conditions^a



entry	catalyst	ligand ^b	yield of 3a ^c (%)
1	NbCl ₅	PCy ₃	83 (82, 84 ^d)
2	NbCl ₅	none	nd ^e
3	NbCl ₅	PPh ₃	24
4	NbCl ₅	P(Oct) ₃	nd ^e
5	NbCl ₅	dppe	3
6 ^f	NbCl ₅	PCy ₃	nd ^e
7 ^g	NbCl ₅	PCy ₃	40
8 ^h	NbCl ₅	PCy ₃	46
9 ⁱ	NbCl ₅	PCy ₃	71
10 ^j	NbCl ₅	PCy ₃	73
11 ^k	NbCl ₅	PCy ₃	9
12	NbCl ₅ (DME)	PCy ₃	nd ^e
13	TaCl ₅	PCy ₃	nd ^e
14	ZrCl ₄	PCy ₃	nd ^e

^aReaction conditions: **1a** (0.5 mmol), **2a** (3.0 mmol), catalyst (0.1 mmol, 20 mol %), Zn (0.5 mmol), and ligand (0.6 mmol) in 1,2-dichloroethane (2 mL) at 40 °C for 2 h under Ar. ^bCone angle (deg): PCy₃ (170), PPh₃ (132); see ref 16. ^cYields were determined by GC based on **1a** used. GC yields, except the value in parentheses. The numbers in parentheses show isolated yields. ^dIsolated yield from larger scale reaction (**1a**: 1.0 mmol). ^eNot detected by GC. ^fWithout Zn. ^gZn (0.25 mmol) was used. ^h**2a** (0.5 mmol) was used. ⁱ**2a** (1.0 mmol) was used. ^j**2a** (2.0 mmol) was used. ^kNbCl₅ (0.05 mmol), Zn (0.25 mmol), and PCy₃ (0.1 mmol) were used.

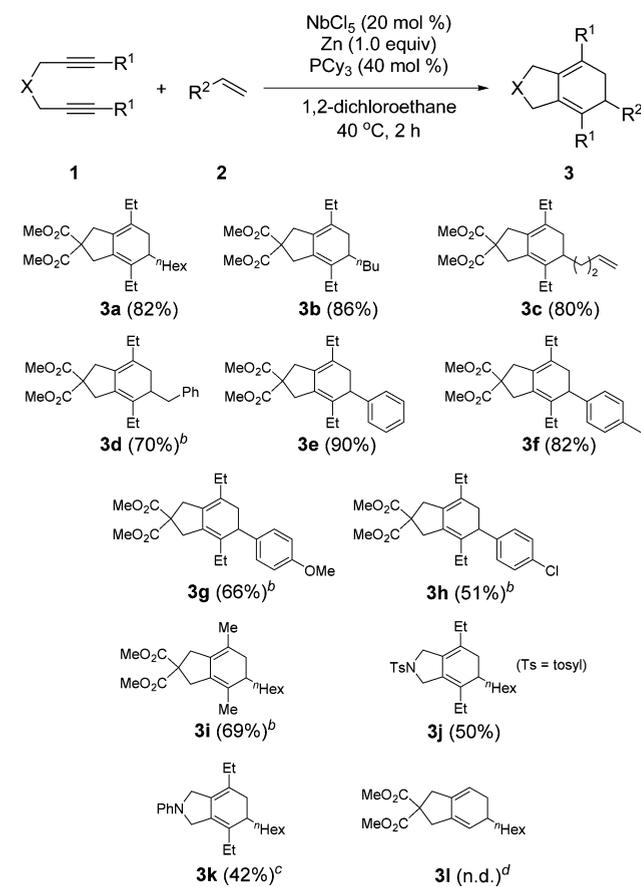
(0.5 mmol) was reacted with **2a** (3 mmol) in the presence of NbCl₅ (0.2 mmol), Zn (0.5 mmol), and PCy₃ (0.2 mmol) in 1,2-dichloroethane (2 mL) at 40 °C for 2 h, the reaction provided bicyclic cyclohexadiene **3a** in 82% yield (entry 1). It is noteworthy that side products, such as cyclotrimerization products of alkynes, in the aromatization of **3a** are not obtained. Takai and co-workers reported that NbCl₅/Zn catalysis is effective for generating low-valent Nb species in situ.^{2c} We therefore used NbCl₅ and Zn in this reaction; however, **3a** was not obtained, and none of the diyne was converted (entry 2).

We then investigated the effects of other phosphine ligands, namely PPh₃, P(*n*-Oct)₃, and 1,2-bis(diphenylphosphino)ethane (dppe) (compare entries 1 and 3–5). When PCy₃ was used for the cycloaddition, the reaction proceeded quantitatively. Other phosphine ligands were not efficient in the reaction. These ligand-screening results imply that the cone angle¹⁶ affects stabilization of the low-valent Nb species and the reactivity of the cycloaddition. Recently, we found that NbCl₅/Zn/Ph₂Si(OMe)₂ catalyzes the cycloaddition of alkynes and nitriles to give pyridines.^{9b} However, Ph₂Si(OMe)₂ was used instead of PCy₃ in the reaction, and a complex mixture of isomers was obtained. When the reaction was performed without Zn, the cycloaddition did not proceed (entry 6). This shows that Zn is necessary to activate the catalyst. Compounds **1a** and **2a** reacted in a 1:1 stoichiometric ratio to give the product in moderate yield (entry 8). When a **2a**:**1a**

stoichiometric ratio of 2:1 and 4:1 was used, **3a** was obtained in good yields (71% and 73%, respectively, entries 9–10). The product yield was poor when the catalyst loading was 10 mol % (entry 11). The substrate was not converted when other early transition-metal compounds, i.e., NbCl₅(DME), TaCl₅, and ZrCl₄, were used (entries 12–14).

The reactions of various alkenes **2** under the optimum conditions, shown in Table 1, entry 1, were investigated (Scheme 2, **3a–h**). Alkyne **1a** was reacted with various aliphatic alkenes (**2a–d**) using the optimum catalytic system (Scheme 2, **3a–d**).

Scheme 2. NbCl₅/Zn/PCy₃-Catalyzed Cycloadditions of Dienes **1** and Alkenes **2**^a



^aReaction conditions: see optimum conditions (Table 1, entry 1). ^bReaction temperature was 60 °C. ^cP(*o*-tolyl)₃ was used as ligand. ^dNot detected by GC.

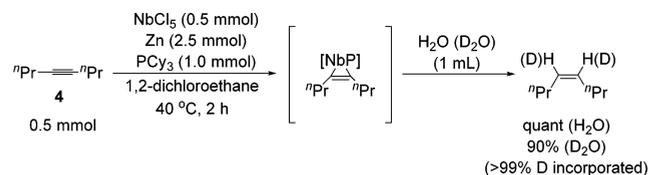
The 1-alkene 1-hexene (**2b**), α,ω -diene 1,5-hexadiene (**2c**), and an aliphatic alkene bearing a benzene ring, i.e., allylbenzene (**2d**), gave the corresponding bicyclic cyclohexadienes **3b–d** in 70–86% yields, with excellent chemo- and regioselectivities. Various styrene derivatives (**2e–h**) were tolerated in the cycloaddition. Styrene (**2e**) and *p*-methylstyrene (**2f**) provided the desired products **3e** and **3f** in excellent yields. When styrene derivatives with functional groups, e.g., *p*-methoxystyrene (**2g**) and *p*-chlorostyrene (**2h**), were used in the reaction, the bicyclic hexadienes **3g** and **3h** were obtained in 66% and 51% yields, respectively. Internal alkenes, e.g., *cis*-4-octene and cyclohexene, did not give any cycloadducts.

We next investigated the scope of the reaction using various diynes (Scheme 2, **3i–l**). When an ethyl group on the alkyne

skeleton was changed to a methyl group [1b, dimethyl 2,2-di(but-2-ynyl)malonate], the reaction afforded the corresponding product 3i in 69% yield. Similarly, the sulfonamide- and aniline-substituted diynes 1c and 1d, respectively, reacted with 1a to provide the desired products 3j and 3k in moderate yields. However, in the reaction of an α,ω -diyne [1e, dimethyl 2,2-di(prop-2-ynyl)malonate] with 2a under the standard conditions, the desired product was not obtained and the diyne was converted to intractable oligomeric products. We have recently reported that the NbCl₅/Zn/alkoxysilane system indicated high catalytic activity to intermolecular cycloaddition of *tert*-butylacetylene and benzonitrile to afford pyridine derivatives.^{9b} However, the reaction was sluggish, and no catalytic activity was observed by using the present NbCl₅/Zn/PCy₃ system under these conditions.

In previous studies, the low-valent Nb complex NbCl₅(DME) reacted with internal alkynes to give *cis*-alkenes by hydrolysis via a Nb-alkyne complex.^{2a,b,3,4} We therefore examined the stoichiometric reaction of NbCl₅, Zn, and PCy₃ with 4-octyne (4) (0.5 mmol); *cis*-4-octene was obtained by hydrolysis or deuteriolysis.^{9c} This result suggests that NbCl₅, Zn, and PCy₃ efficiently generated low-valent Nb species in situ (Scheme 3).

Scheme 3. Hydrolysis/Deuteriolysis of Low-Valent Niobium Complex Generated from NbCl₅/Zn/PCy₃ and 4-Octyne (4)



In addition, we observed the presence of PCy₃ coordinated to a low-valent Nb-alkyne (4) complex using ¹³C and ³¹P NMR spectroscopies. The alkyne carbon peaks of the Nb-alkyne complexes were observed at 239.7 and 229.5 ppm in the ¹³C NMR spectrum along with the peaks at 251.2 ppm which were assignable to the NbCl₅-alkyne complex reported by our group (lit.^{9c} 250.9 ppm) (Figure S1). In addition, the ³¹P NMR spectrum showed peaks at around the range of 30 ppm, which are comparable to the peaks reported for the phosphine-ligated Nb species,¹⁷ along with other unassignable peaks (Figure S2). These results imply that a bulky phosphine ligand such as PCy₃ stabilizes and activates the low-valent Nb species in the synthesis of bicyclic cyclohexadienes. However, we could not determine the full structure of the expected phosphine-ligated niobium complexes.

A possible reaction pathway is as follows: the initial step is generation of a low-valent Nb species from NbCl₅, in which Zn¹⁸ acts as a reductant. This active low-valent Nb species can also be stabilized by PCy₃.¹⁷ The oxidative cycloaddition of diynes to low-valent [Nb] then takes place and forms the niobacyclopentadiene intermediate A.^{18a,19} Niobacyclopentadiene A undergoes a Diels-Alder-type alkene insertion to give niobanorbornene intermediate B. Lastly, bicyclic cyclohexadiene 3 is formed by reductive fragmentation of low-valent Nb (Figure S3). All attempts to isolate and characterize the niobium intermediates in the catalytic cycle were unsuccessful.

In conclusion, we have developed a low-valent-Nb-catalyzed [2 + 2 + 2] intramolecular cycloaddition reaction between diynes and simple alkenes to give bicyclic cyclohexadiene

derivatives. A phosphine ligand is critical in promoting the intramolecular cycloaddition. This is the first example of the transition-metal-catalyzed synthesis of bicyclic cyclohexadienes from the reaction of various diynes with terminal alkenes without double-bond migration. Further investigations regarding the scope and application of this reaction are underway.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.orglett.7b02672.

Experimental procedures and compound characterization (PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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