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Palladium-catalyzed direct 5-arylation of 1,3-dimethyluracil with aryl bromides: an electrophilic metalation–deprotonation with electrophilic arylpalladium intermediate

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ABSTRACT

An efficient method of palladium-catalyzed direct 5-arylation of 1,3-dimethyluracil was developed with a various range of aryl bromides including electron-deficient aryl bromides. 5-Aryluracil derivatives were obtained in moderate to good yields regioselectively most likely via an electrophilic metalation-deprotonation process.

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5-Aryluracil and its nucleoside derivatives have received much attention due to their wide range of biological activities¹ and applications in bioanalysis or chemical biology.² Most frequently, these compounds were prepared by palladium-catalyzed cross-coupling reactions of 5-halouracils with arylboronic acids³ or arylstannanes.⁴ However, the yields of 5-aryluracil derivatives were moderate and highly toxic stannane impurities would be a problem for the biological study with the product obtained from arylstannane. Recently, Hocek and co-workers reported an elegant palladium-catalyzed direct arylation of N–H protected uracils with aryl halides.^{5,6} However, the yields of 5-aryluracils were moderate and the selectivity between 5- and 6-aryluracils was not satisfactory. In addition, aryl halides bearing an electron-withdrawing substituent failed in the reaction.

In these respects, we decided to develop a more efficient protocol for the 5-arylation of 1,3-dimethyluracil (**1a**). At the outset of this study, we focused our attention to a palladium-catalyzed direct arylations of indole derivatives, which have been studied deeply by many research groups.^{7.8} As shown in Scheme 1, the reactivity of 1,3-dimethyluracil (**1a**) toward an electrophile would be very similar with that of indole, in that both compounds have an enamine moiety and attack an electrophile at the 3-position of indole and the 5-position of uracil. Thus most of the reported palladium-catalyzed arylations of indole used an electrophilic palladium intermediate,⁷ while the concept has not been examined with uracil derivatives, to the best of our knowledge.⁹ Actually, however, the palladium intermediate I of indole was converted to a more stable benzylic carbocation intermediate II via a 1,2-palladium migration⁸ and eventually provided 2-arylindole. A similar 1,2-migration of palladium in the case of uracil (III to IV) would be difficult because the carbocation intermediate IV is not stable due to the presence of nearby electron-deficient carbon atom of carbonyl moiety. In addition, the hydrogen at the 5-position of intermediate III is acidic, thus the intermediate III could be converted to an aryluracilpalladium intermediate V readily, and eventually to 1,3-dimethyl-5-aryluracil (3a) via a reductive elimination of Pd⁰. Thus the formation 3a would be a major pathway when the electrophilic palladation of 1a operates effectively.

Thus we expected that we could increase the yield of **3a** and improve the ratio of **3a/4a** at the same time, by using an electrophilic arylpalladium species. The use of a relatively poorly coordinating carboxylate as the counterion could allow the dissociation of ArPdBr into more electrophilic arylpalladium species ArPd⁺[OCOR]⁻.⁷⁴ Subsequently, a proportion of an electrophilic palladation process could be increased while a Heck-type carbopalladation process (vide infra) decreased. Based on the assumption we decided to use pivalic acid (PivOH) as a carboxylate ion source, and examined the reaction of **1a** as summarized in Table 1.

Initially, the reaction of **1a** and bromobenzene (**2a**) was examined under three typical palladium-catalyzed reaction conditions (entries 1–3). When we use Cs_2CO_3 , **3a** was isolated in low yield (18%) along with **4a** (8%). In the reaction, biphenyl was produced in appreciable amounts by Ullmann type aryl–aryl reductive





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Scheme 1. Similarity and difference between indole and 1,3-dimethyluracil (1a) in their Pd-catalyzed arylation.

Table 1		
Optimization of reaction conditions	for the synthesis of	1,3-dimethyl-5-phenyluracil (3a)

Entry	Conditions ^a	3a (%)	4a (%)
1	PPh ₃ (20 mol %), Cs ₂ CO ₃ (3.0 equiv), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	18	8
2	PPh ₃ (20 mol %), K ₂ CO ₃ (3.0 equiv), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	42	8
3	TBAC (1.0 equiv), K ₂ CO ₃ (3.0 equiv), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	29	10
4 ^b	PPh3 (20 mol %), K2CO3 (3.0 equiv), PivOH (30 mol %), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	79	10
5	PPh3 (20 mol %), K2CO3 (3.0 equiv), PivOH (100 mol %), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	71	8
6	PPh ₃ (20 mol %), K ₂ CO ₃ (3.0 equiv), PivOH (30 mol %), DMF, 100 °C, 12 h	73	8
7 ^c	PPh3 (10 mol %), K2CO3 (3.0 equiv), PivOH (30 mol %), DMF, 100 °C, 12 h	70	10
8 ^d	TBAC (1.0 equiv), K ₂ CO ₃ (3.0 equiv), PivOH (30 mol %), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	77	9
9	PPh3 (20 mol %), Na2CO3 (3.0 equiv), PivOH (30 mol %), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	14	25
10	PPh ₃ (20 mol %), AgNO ₃ (1.0 equiv), K ₂ CO ₃ (3.0 equiv), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	42	6
11	PPh3 (20 mol %), Ag2O (1.0 equiv), K2CO3 (3.0 equiv), PivOH (30 mol %), DMF, 130 °C, 12 h	44	6

^a PhBr (2.0 equiv) and Pd(OAc)₂ (10 mol %) are common, unless otherwise noted.

^b Selected as condition A.

^c Pd(OAc)₂ (5 mol %) was used.

^d Selected as condition B.

coupling reaction.¹⁰ Replacing the base to K₂CO₃¹¹ increased the yield of **3a** to 42%; however, the result was not satisfactory (entry 2). The use of ligandless conditions employing TBAC (tertabutylammonium chloride) was not effective (entry 3). The use of PivOH dramatically improved the yield of **3a**, as shown in entries 4–8, as compared to the reactions carried out without PivOH (entries 1-3). When we use K₂CO₃/PivOH combination (entry 4), the yield of **3a** increased to 79%; however, 4a was also formed albeit in low yield (10%).¹² Increasing the amounts of PivOH (entry 5) was not effective. Lowering the reaction temperature did not improve the selectivity (entry 6). Lower loading of Pd/PPh₃ decreased the yield of **3a** slightly (entry 7). The use of TBAC in the presence of PivOH (entry 8) showed a similar result with that of entry 4. The use of Na_2CO_3 was not effective even in the presence of PivOH (entry 9). In order to abstract a bromide ion effectively from ArPdBr and generate a more electrophilic arylpalladium intermediate,^{7a} the addition of silver salts such as AgNO₃ or Ag₂O was examined; however, it was not helpful (entries 10 and 11). With the optimization experiments, we found that the conditions employing K₂CO₃/PivOH in the presence of PPh₃ (entry 4: condition A) or TBAC (entry 8: condition B) were the best. Although the selectivity was not high enough, we could certainly increase the yield of 3a.^{5,13}

In order to examine the generality, we performed the reactions of **1a** with various aryl bromides **2a–j**, and the results are summarized in Table 2. The reactions with 4-bromotoluene (2b), 2-bromotoluene (2c), 2-bromonaphthalene (2d), and 1-bromonaphthalene (2e) afforded the corresponding 5-aryl products 3b-e in good yields (66-71%) along with low yields of 6-aryl derivatives **4b-d** (8-10%). The reaction with 4-bromoanisole (2f), however, showed a guite different result. Under the conditions employing PPh₃ (entry 4 in Table 1: condition A), 5-aryl 3f, and 6-aryl 4f were isolated in 38% and 40%, respectively. We thought that the moderate combined vield (78%) and low selectivity between **3f/4f** (almost 1:1) might be ascribed to the low electrophilicity of 4-MeOPhPdX species which renders the electrophilic palladation difficult. An electrondonating methoxy group made the arylpalladium intermediate less electrophilic. In addition, the presence of electron-rich PPh₃ ligand could make the arylpalladium species less electrophilic.^{7b} Thus we examined a ligandless condition (entry 8 in Table 1: condition B), and we could improve both the yield and selectivity (3f: 65% and

Table 2

Palladium-catalyzed direct 5-arylation of 1,3-dimethyluracil



^a 5-Aryl derivatives **3a**-**j** are shown in Table, and the yields of **3** and **4** are isolated.

^b Failed to isolate.

4f: 25%), as shown in entry 6. Similarly, the reaction with 3-bromoanisole (**2g**) provided **3g** in good yield (75%). The reactions with aryl bromides bearing an electron-withdrawing group showed sluggish reactivity. Methyl 4-bromobenzoate (**2h**), methyl 3-bromobenzoate (**2i**), and 3-bromopyridine (**2j**) produced the desired compounds **3h–j** in low to moderate yields (35–43%). We could obtain the corresponding 5-aryluracil derivatives from aryl bromides bearing an EWG group, albeit in moderate yields, in contrast to the paper of Hocek.⁵

The reaction mechanism for the selective formation of 5-aryluracils **3a**–**j** could be postulated as shown in Scheme 2. Heck-type carbopalladation (vide supra) of 5,6-double bond of **1a** with ArPdBr species could occur in two ways to form **VII** and **VIII**. Epimerization of **VII** and **VIII** at the 5-position could provide **IX** and **X** via the corresponding enol or palladium enolate, respectively, and a following syn β -H elimination would produce **3** and **4**, respectively. However, another important pathway must be involved for the exclusive formation of **3**. The pathway could be an electrophilic metalation– deprotonation (EMD) mechanism. The ionization of arylpalladium bromide ArPdBr to a cationic palladium intermediate ArPd⁺ could be facilitated in the presence of PivOK,^{7a} especially in a polar solvent such as DMF, as Sharp and co-workers reported in their regioselective arylation of furan.¹⁴ A subsequent electrophilic palladation could occur easily and regioselectively at the electron-rich 5-position of **1a** to form aryluracilpalladium intermediate **VI**, and a following re-aromatization provided **3** after a reductive elimination of Pd⁰.

As another entry, we examined 5-phenylation of 1-(tetrahydrofuran-2-yl)-3-benzyluracil (**1b**)¹⁵ with bromobenzene (**2a**) under the same reaction conditions; however, a severe decomposition was observed at 130 °C. By lowering the reaction temperature to 100 °C, we could isolate **3k** in 55%,¹² as shown in Scheme 3. In the reaction, the corresponding 6-phenyl derivative was not formed in any trace amount presumably due to the steric hindrance caused by tetrahydrofuranyl moiety.

As we started the 5-arylation of **1a** by deep consideration of indole derivatives, we decided to examine the feasibility of selective synthesis of 6-aryl derivative **4a** by applying the reported method of oxidative arylation of indoles. Fagnou^{16a,b} and DeBoef^{16c,d} have reported oxidative arylations of indoles with arenes. As shown in Scheme 4, the reaction of **1a** was examined in the presence of





Pd(TFA)₂, AgOAc, and PivOH in benzene (reflux, 20 h). To our delight, **4a** was obtained in high yield (85%) along with a trace amount of **3a** (6%). The mechanism for the selective formation of **4a** could be proposed as follows based on the works of Fagnou and DeBoef.¹⁶ A regioselective palladation occurred at the 6-position of **1a** to form **XI**, most likely via a concerted metalationdeprotonation (CMD) process by Pd^{II}(L)(OPiv) species involving a deprotonation of more acidic hydrogen atom at the 6-position.⁵ A subsequent arylation of uracilpalladium intermediate **XI** with benzene via a second CMD process produced **4a** after reductive elimination of Pd⁰, which was oxidized to Pd^{II} by AgOAc.¹⁷ Similarly, the reactions of **1a** and three xylene isomers under the similar conditions¹⁸ afforded the corresponding 6-xylyluracil derivatives **4I-n** in moderate to good yields (52–80%), as also shown in Scheme 4.

In summary, we disclosed a palladium-catalyzed direct 5arylation of 1,3-dimethyluracil with various range of aryl



Scheme 4.

bromides including electron-deficient aryl bromides. 5-Aryluracils were formed exclusively most likely via an electrophilic metalation-deprotonation process while the 6-aryl derivatives via a Heck-type mechanism as minor products. In addition, 1,3-dimethyl-6-phenyluracil (**4a**) was also synthesized in high yield by oxidative arylation with benzene via a CMD mechanism. Further studies on the reaction mechanism and the scope of this reaction are currently underway including an intramolecular version.

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- In the papers of Hocek,⁵ an electron-deficient tris(pentafluorophenyl)phosphine might be helpful for the increase of the electrophilicity of an arylpalladium intermediate.

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- 12. Typical procedure for the synthesis of 1,3-dimethyl-5-phenyluracil (3a): A stirred mixture of 1,3-dimethyluracil (1a, 140 mg, 1.0 mmol), bromobenzene (2a, 315 mg, 2.0 equiv), Pd(OAc)₂ (22 mg, 10 mol %), PPh₃ (52 mg, 20 mol %), PivOH (30 mg, 30 mol %), K₂CO₃ (415 mg, 3.0 equiv) in DMF (1.5 mL) was heated to 130 °C for 12 h under nitrogen atmosphere. After the usual aqueous extractive workup with chloroform and column chromatographic purification process (hexanes/THF, 4:1) compounds 3a (171 mg, 79%) and 4a (21 mg, 10%) were obtained as white solids.⁵ Other compounds were synthesized analogously, and the known compounds 3a-d^{5,19a} and 3f,^{5,19a} 4a-d,^{5,19a} 4g,^{5,19a} 4g^{19a} were identified by comparison their mp, IR, ¹H NMR and/or mass data with the reported. The selected spectroscopic data of 3e and 3g-k are as follows. *Compound* 3e^{:19b} 71%; white solid, mp 203-204 °C; IR (KBr) 2945, 1700, 1646,

Compound **3e**:^{19b} 71%; white solid, mp 203–204 °C; IR (KBr) 2945, 1700, 1646, 1450, 1346 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 3.43 (s, 3H), 3.44 (s, 3H), 7.25 (s, 1H), 7.33 (dd, *J* = 6.9 and 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.44–7.50 (m, 3H), 7.68–7.71 (m, 1H), 7.85–7.88 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 28.22, 36.90, 113.54, 125.18, 125.25, 125.90, 126.22, 128.12, 128.36, 128.97, 130.57, 132.29, 133.58, 142.13, 151.72, 162.57; ESIMS *m*/*z* 267 [M+H]^{*}, Anal. Calcd for C₁₆H₁₄N₂O₂: C, 72.16; H, 5.30; N, 10.52. Found: C, 72.43; H, 5.57; N, 10.29.

Compound **3g**: ^{19a} 75%; white solid, mp 122–124 °C; IR (KBr) 2946, 1702, 1656, 1603, 1491, 1451, 1350 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 3.42 (s, 3H), 3.47 (s, 3H), 3.83 (s, 3H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.00–7.12 (m, 2H), 7.22–7.36 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 28.25, 37.10, 55.29, 113.57, 113.96, 114.16, 120.50, 129.41, 134.20, 140.53, 151.42, 159.56, 162.23; ESIMS *m/z* 247 [M+H]*. Anal. Calcd for C₁₃H₁₄N₂O₃: C, 63.40; H, 5.73; N, 11.38. Found: C, 63.75; H, 5.96; N, 11.13.

Compound 3h: 40%; white solid, mp 180-181 °C; IR (KBr) 1707, 1651, 1607, T279, 1112 cm⁻¹; ¹ H MR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 3.43 (s, 3H), 3.50 (s, 3H), 3.92 (s, 3H), 7.40 (s, 1H), 7.60 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 8.04 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) & 28.25, 37.21, 52.10, 113.21, 127.97, 129.25, 129.64, 137.54, 141.13, 151.24, 161.89, 166.72; ESIMS m/z 275 [M+H]*. Anal. Calcd for C14H14N2O4: C, 61.31; H, 5.14; N, 10.21. Found: C, 61.39; H, 5.45; N, 10.06. Compound 3i: 43%; white solid, mp 158-159 °C; IR (KBr) 2953, 1713, 1652, 1253 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 3.42 (s, 3H), 3.49 (s, 3H), 3.92 (s, 3H), 7.39 (s, 1H), 7.46 (dd, *J* = 7.8 and 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.79 (ddd, *J* = 7.8, 1.8 and 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (ddd, J = 7.8, 1.8 and 1.2 Hz, 1H), 8.10-8.11 (m, 1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 28.17, 37.08, 52.13, 113.13, 128.42, 128.75, 128.86, 130.28, 132.91, 133.19, 140.86, 151.26, 162.05, 166.72; ESIMS *m/z* 275 [M+H]⁺. Anal. Calcd for C14H14N2O4: C, 61.31; H, 5.14; N, 10.21. Found: C, 61.64; H, 5.45; N, 10.13. *Compound* **3***j*:^{19c} 35%; white solid, mp 198–200 °C; IR (KBr) 1693, 1650, 1483, 1350 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 3.43 (s, 3H), 3.51 (s, 3H), 7.28–7.38 (m, 1H), 7.39 (s, 1H), 7.95 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 8.57 (br s, 1H), 8.65 (br s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 28.25, 37.24, 111.02, 123.14, 129.00, 136.07, 140.68, 148.30, 148.88, 151.26, 162.03; ESIMS m/z 218 [M+H]⁺. Anal. Calcd for C₁₁H₁₁N₃O₂: C, Compound **3k**: 55%; sticky oil; IR (film) 3060, 2960, 2892, 1702, 1658, 1494, 1458, 1440, 1291, 1076 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 1.85–2.14 (m, 3H) 2.37-2.49 (m, 1H), 3.95-4.02 (m, 1H), 4.17-4.23 (m, 1H), 5.14 (d, J = 13.5 Hz,

1H), 5.23 (d, J = 13.5 Hz, 1H), 6.08 (dd, J = 6.3 and 3.3 Hz, 1H), 7.22–7.42 (m, 6H), 7.44 (s, 1H), 7.46–7.57 (m, 4H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 23.90, 33.11, 44.54, 70.19, 88.05, 114.14, 127.62, 127.78, 128.36, 128.41 (2C), 129.41, 133.39, 134.71, 136.85, 150.43, 161.83; ESIMS m/z 349 [M+H]⁺. Anal. Calcd for C₂₁H₂₀N₂O₃: C, 72.40; H, 5.79; N, 8.04. Found: C, 72.23; H, 5.96; N, 7.89.

- 13. We also examined the reaction of **1a** under the modified condition Å, by simply replacing PPh₃ with tris(pentafluorophenyl)phosphine;⁵ however, the results were not satisfactory (**3a**: 73% and **4a**: 18%). Replacement of PPh₃ with an electron-poor triethyl phosphite ligand was also examined in order to make the arylpalladium intermediate more electrophilic, however, the yield and selectivity were similar (**3a**: 74% and **4a**: 16%) with those of (C₆F₅)₃P. In addition, the reaction of **1a** and iodobenzene produced biphenyl as a major product along with a low yield of **3a** (<15%).
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- The yields of 4a and 3a were 60% and 16%, respectively, when we used 17. Pd(OAc)₂ instead of Pd(TFA)₂.
- 18. The reaction at 80 °C was so sluggish that we raised the temperature to 110 °C. The yield of 41 was moderate due to steric crowdedness during the second CMD process between uracilpalladium intermediate **XI** and p-xylene, as reported in the oxidative arylation of indoles.¹⁶ The corresponding 5-xylyl derivative was not observed at all. When we used o-xylene, compound 4m was obtained in 66% along with a low yield of the corresponding 5-xylyl derivative (17%). In the case of *m*-xylene, **4n** was obtained in high yield (80%) along with a

- low yield of the corresponding 5-xylyl derivative (11%). *Compound* **4I**:^{19a} 52%; colorless oil; IR (film) 2952, 1706, 1662, 1438, 1367 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ 2.19 (s, 3H), 2.35 (s, 3H), 3.08 (s, 3H), 3.42 (s, 3H), 5.64 (s, 1H), 6.96 (s, 1H), 7.19 (s, 2H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ 18.70, 20.79, 27.95, 33.17, 101.95, 128.34, 130.48, 130.78, 131.97, 132.78, 136.17, 152.52, 154.35, 162.60; ESIMS *m/z* 245 [M+H]* Anal. Calcd for C₁₄H₁₆N₂O₂: C, 68.83; H, 6.60; N, 11.47. Found: C, 68.96; H, 6.89: N 11.23 6.89; N, 11.23.
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