

Rh(II)-catalysed room temperature aziridination of homoallyl-carbamates†

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Received (in Cambridge, UK) 14th August 2006, Accepted 26th September 2006

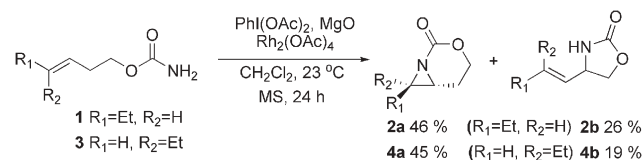
First published as an Advance Article on the web 12th October 2006

DOI: 10.1039/b611662k

Rhodium(II) catalysts and PhIO in benzene convert homoallylic carbamates into the corresponding aziridines at room temperature.

There has been a recent resurgence of interest in transition metal-catalysed amination reactions and it is now possible to effect efficient and highly selective 1,5- or 1,6-CH insertions under mild conditions using carbamate or sulfamate ester precursors respectively.¹ Du Bois' recent total syntheses of tetrodotoxin and manzacidin A² serve as excellent illustrations of what can be achieved using this new synthetic tool. Aziridination has also developed at a fast pace, with homoallyl-sulfamate esters being excellent precursors for this transformation.³ Padwa,^{3,de} Rojas⁴ and Lebel⁵ have all reported studies on the catalytic aziridination and subsequent ring opening of allylic carbamates but the equivalent aziridination and ring opening of homoallyl-carbamates has been somewhat overlooked. Lebel *et al.* attempted this transformation on two substrates, but they found that 1,5-CH insertion was the only reaction pathway on one example and the second gave equal amounts of CH-insertion and aziridination. In this communication we wish to report reaction conditions for the room temperature aziridination of homoallylic carbamates, along with studies on regioselective aziridine-ring openings.

We first prepared the *E*- and *Z*-homoallyl-carbamates **1** and **3**, from the corresponding alcohols according to the procedure of Kocovsky,⁶ and then subjected them to the previously developed CH-insertion conditions of Du Bois (Rh₂(OAc)₄, PhI(OAc)₂, CH₂Cl₂) (Scheme 1). Encouragingly, aziridination was favoured over the competing CH-insertion reaction pathway, and the transformation was stereospecific. We next examined the use of Padwa's iodosylbenzene-based conditions (Rh₂(OAc)₄, PhIO, CH₂Cl₂) that had been developed for aziridination of allylic



Scheme 1

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† Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available: Experimental procedures and analytical data for all new compounds. See DOI: 10.1039/b611662k

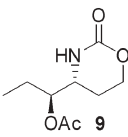
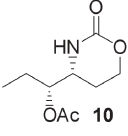
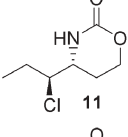
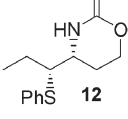
carbamates, but no significant improvement was observed. During further optimization studies we found that replacing CH₂Cl₂ with benzene led to a significant improvement in aziridination (entries 1 and 5, Table 1) and these conditions were used on a range of other homoallyl-carbamates. We were pleased to see that the expected aziridines were formed as the major products in all cases (entries 9, 12, 14, 16, Table 1). The stereochemistry of the aziridine products was determined from the magnitude of the vicinal coupling constant between the two aziridine protons in the ¹H NMR spectrum.⁷ We did not observe any aziridination under thermal

Table 1 Rh(II)-mediated aziridination of homoallyl-carbamates^a

Entry		Catalyst	% Yield	Products
1	Rh ₂ (OAc) ₄	68 : 14	2a	2b
2	Rh ₂ (Oct) ₄	71 : 6		
3	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -TBSP) ₄	66 : 12		
4	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -MEOX) ₄	0 : 40		
5	Rh ₂ (OAc) ₄	58 : 18	4a	4b
6	Rh ₂ (Oct) ₄	70 : 13		
7	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -TBSP) ₄	71 : 13		
8	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -MEOX) ₄	31 : 30		
9	Rh ₂ (OAc) ₄	39 : 17	5a	5b
10	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -TBSP) ₄	78 : 0		
11	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -MEOX) ₄	0 : 33		
12	Rh ₂ (OAc) ₄	31 : 8	6a	6b
13	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -TBSP) ₄	66 : 0		
14	Rh ₂ (OAc) ₄	26 : 5	7a	7b
15	Rh ₂ (<i>S</i> -TBSP) ₄	60 : 0		
16	Rh ₂ (OAc) ₄	35 : 5	8a	8b

^a 2 equiv. PhIO, 0.05 equiv. Rh(II)-catalyst in benzene at 23 °C over 3 Å mol. sieves for 24 h.

Table 2 Nucleophilic ring openings of aziridines

Entry	Starting Material	Conditions	% Yield	Product
1	2a	HOAc, THF	88	
2	4a	HOAc, THF	74	
3	2a	HCl, 1,4-dioxan, H ₂ O	62	
4	4a	PhSH, CH ₂ Cl ₂	91	

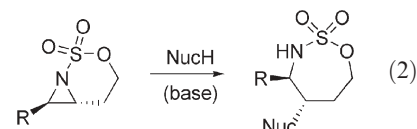
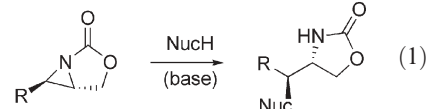
conditions (40–80 °C) in the absence of the Rh(II) catalyst, thus proving that this is a metal-catalysed process, and this is contrary to Padwa's observations in the allylic carbamate series.^{3d,e}

We speculated that the heterogeneous nature of the reaction conditions contributed to the variability in isolated yield of the aziridines. In order to test this hypothesis we examined the use of Rh₂(Oct)₄ and Rh₂(S-TBSP)₄ as catalysts due to their improved solubility in benzene.[‡] Pleasingly, both catalysts gave reproducibly good yields of aziridines (entries 2, 3, 6, 7, Table 1), but Rh₂(S-TBSP)₄ proved to be the better catalyst over a wider range of substrates (entries 3, 7, 10, 13, 15, Table 1). Enantiomeric excesses of between 1 and 23% were observed in the reactions using Rh₂(S-TBSP)₄ and Rh₂(S-MEOX)₄ as catalysts (please see supporting information for individual values), and work is underway to try and improve the asymmetric induction in these transformations. It is interesting to note that during our catalyst screen, we found that Rh₂(S-MEOX)₄ tended to catalyse the competitive 1,5-CH-insertion reaction (entries 4 and 11, Table 1), thus demonstrating that the nature of the ligand is crucial in controlling the chemoselectivity of the reaction. Although most di- and tri-substituted alkenes underwent aziridination, we did find that terminal alkenes were generally poor substrates (e.g. entry 16, Table 1) and that α,β-unsaturated ketones failed to cyclise under any form of Rh(II)-catalysis.

In order to assess their future synthetic potential, a selection of the previously formed aziridines was exposed to a range of heteroatom nucleophiles, and the results are summarized in Table 2.

Complete regioselectivity was observed in all ring-opening reactions, and stereochemical integrity was maintained during

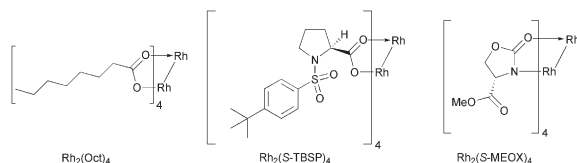
the course of the reactions. The regioselectivity observed in the [4,1,0]-carbamate-tethered aziridine ring opening reactions was the same as that observed for the related [3,1,0]-carbamate-tethered aziridine series (equation 1),^{8,3d} but is complementary to that observed for [4,1,0]-sulfamate tethered aziridines (equation 2).^{1b,e,3c}



Our efforts are now directed towards the development of enantioselective variants of these transformations, and the results of these studies will be reported in due course.

Notes and references

[‡] The commercially available catalysts Rh₂(Oct)₄, Rh₂(S-TBSP)₄ and Rh₂(S-MEOX)₄ have the following structures:



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- As with other reported aziridine products, the *trans*-isomers have smaller coupling constants ($J = 3\text{--}3.5$ Hz) than the corresponding *cis*-isomers ($J = 5\text{--}5.5$ Hz).
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