

Anionic Indole *N*-Carbamoyl N → C Translocation. A Directed remote Metalation Route to 2-Aryl- and 2-Heteroarylindoles. Synthesis of Benz[*a*]carbazoles and Indeno[1,2-*b*]indoles

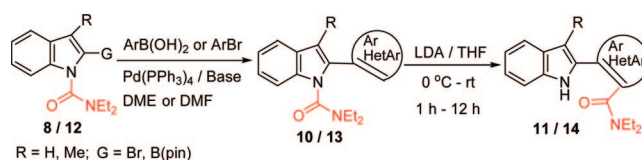
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Received February 11, 2008

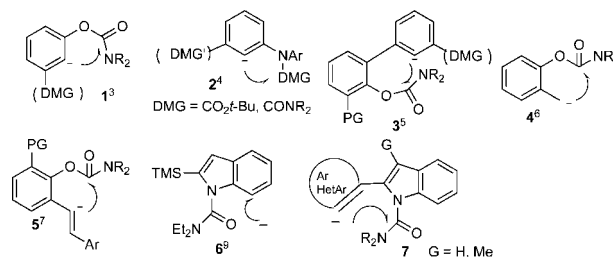
ABSTRACT



A new LDA-induced anionic N→C carbamoyl migration of 2-arylindoles (**7**) is reported. Treatment of *N*-carbamoylindoles **10** and **13**, readily available by direct and *ipso*-borodesilylative Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling routes from **8** and **12**, respectively, provides a general route to functionalized 2-arylindoles **11** and **14**, respectively (Tables 1 and 2). The reaction has been applied to the synthesis of benzo[*a*]carbazoles **16** and indeno[1,2-*b*]indoles **18**, and its intramolecularity has been established by a crossover experiment (Scheme 4).

Carbanion chemistry¹ continues to noticeably impact synthetic method development for the construction of aromatics and heteroaromatics.^{1c–d} In context of contributions from our laboratories which aim to enhance links to the directed ortho metalation (DoM) reaction,² the anionic *O*- (**1**)³ and *N*-ortho (**2**) Fries,⁴ its remote (**3**)⁵ and homologous (**4**)⁶ counterparts, and most recently, *O*- to *C*-carbamoyl transfer (**5**)⁷ have constituted key steps in establishing unusual substitution patterns and facilitating efficient total synthesis (Scheme 1).⁸

Scheme 1^a



The recent finding that the indole *N*-CONEt₂ serves, after 2-TMS protection, as an excellent DMG for C-7 deprotonation (**6**)⁹ and the availability of 2-arylindoles by Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling chemistry¹⁰ have provided, in combination, the opportunity for the discovery of a new directed remote metalation (DreM) concept (**7**). Herein, we report preliminary studies on this reaction which piggy-backs the carbamoyl DMG to the 2-aryl substituent for further DoM.

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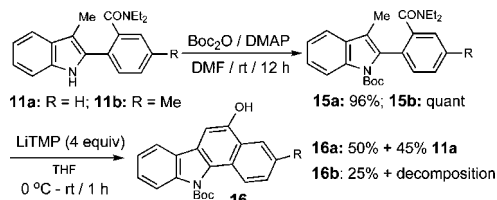
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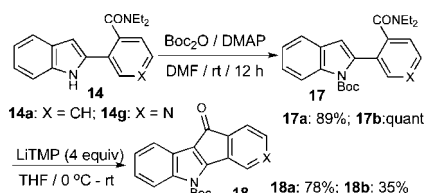
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It also facilitates formation of derivatives **11** which, due to steric encumbrance, are obtained less efficiently or may be unavailable by direct cross-coupling¹¹ and allows the construction of benzocarbazoles and indeno[1,2-*b*]indoles (Schemes 2 and 3), compounds of considerable current interest in the areas of antitumor,¹² estrogen deficiency,¹³ melatonergic disorder,¹⁴ and protein kinase inhibition.¹⁵

Scheme 2



Scheme 3



The results of our preliminary investigations comprise two series of 2-aryl- and 2-heteroarylindoles and are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. In the first series with a view toward remote anionic cyclization chemistry to fused carbazoles,¹¹ *N*-carbamoyl-2-aryl-3-methylindoles **10a–i**¹⁶ were prepared by generally efficient Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling of the *N*-carbamoyl-

Table 1. Synthesis of 2-(Carbamoyl)arylindoles **11a–i**: The Direct Suzuki–Miyaura Cross-Coupling Route from **8**

8		10		11	
Aryboronic acid (9)	Xcoupl product (10)	yield, % ^a	Migration product (11)	yield, % ^a	
1 9a R = H	10a	92	11a	80	
2 9b R = Me	10b	90	11b	92	
3 9c	10c	80	11c	55	
4 9d	10d	89	11d	55	
5 9e	10e	95	11e	94	
6 9f	10f	72	11f	65 ^c	
7 9g X = O	10g	65 ^b	11g	75 ^d	
8 9h X = S	10h	85	11h	56 ^c	
9 9i	10i	89	11i	50	

^a Isolated yields. ^b Pd₂(dba)₃/SPhos/K₃PO₄/MeOH/50 h. ^c –40 °C/1 h. ^d –40 °C/2 equiv of LDA/1 h. ^e 0 °C/2 equiv/40 min.

2-bromoskatole **8**¹⁷ with a variety of aryl- and heteroarylboronic acids **9a–i**, respectively (Table 1).¹⁸ In the prototype reaction (Table 1, entry 1), treatment of **10a** with 2 equiv of LDA¹⁹ led to the formation of the *N*-carbamoyl migration product **11a** in 80% yield. Table 1 illustrates selected cases which deserve brief

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 (5) Wang, W.; Snieckus, V. *J. Org. Chem.* **1992**, *57*, 424.
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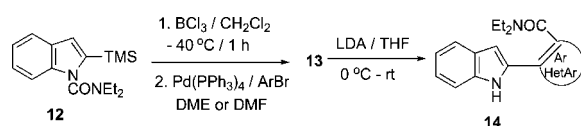
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(17) Prepared in 92% yield by *ipso*-bromodesilylation of *N,N*-diethyl-3-methyl-2-(trimethylsilyl)-1*H*-indole-1-carboxamide; see the Supporting Information.

(18) With the exception of **9i**, which was prepared by hydroboration (see: Kalinin, A. V.; Scherer, S.; Snieckus, V. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed.* **2003**, *42*, 3399), all other arylboronic acids were obtained from commercial sources.

(19) For a typical experimental procedure, see the Supporting Information.

Table 2. Synthesis of 2-(Carbamoyl)arylindoles **14a–g**: The *ipso*-Borodesilylation–Suzuki–Miyaura Cross-Coupling Route from **12**



Entry	Xcouple product (13)	yield (%) ^a	Migration product (14)	yield (%) ^a
1		13a 85 ^b		quant
2		13b 67		quant
3		13c 71		45
4		13d 75		36
5		13e 77		60
6		13f 89 ^c		73 ^d
7		13g 70 ^c		75
8		13h 80 ^b		67

^a Isolated yields. ^b For preparation, see ref 10. ^c Boropinacولات were used. ^d 0 °C for 40 min.

comment. In simple cases, 2 equiv of LDA was sufficient for smooth rearrangement while in substituted derivatives, e.g., **10c,d**, up to 4 equiv of LDA was necessary for optimum yields. Weak (entry 2) and strong (entry 5) electron-donating groups provide excellent yields of products and a synergistic DMG effect, analogous to that observed in *m*-di-DMG-substituted benzenes, is demonstrated by the regioselective migration result (entry 4) albeit in lower yield. A fluoro substituent is tolerated (entry 6), carbamoyl transfer to furan and thiophene rings is observed to the expected, more acidic site²⁰ (entries 7 and 8) and a styryl case (entry 9)²¹ demonstrating an interesting migration to a vinyl anion analogous to that observed generally for *O*-carbamate series,⁷ may be noted. The present methodology for the synthesis of *N*-substituted skatole derivatives **10** circumvents the direct Suzuki–Miyaura coupling route,¹¹ whose inefficiency is presumably due to a tri-*ortho*-substitution hindrance effect.²²

As an alternative route to 2-arylindoles, with the aim of making 3-unsubstituted systems in order to leave the option for further well-established electrophilic substitution chemistry,²³ the recently disclosed method¹⁰ was adapted. Thus, using the

common starting *N*-carbamoyl-2-TMS indole **12**,⁹ *ipso*-borodesilylation followed by in situ Suzuki–Miyaura cross coupling of the presumed dichloroborane^{24,25} with selected aryl bromides led to a variety of 2-aryl (Table 2, entries 1–5) and heteroaryl (entries 6–8) indole derivatives. For the cross coupling, expected halogen chemoselectivity²⁶ (entries 3 and 4) was observed (see the Supporting Information). In this series, the remote metalation–*N*-carbamoyl migration reaction also proceeded smoothly and, in some cases (entries 1 and 6, Table 2), in higher yields than the corresponding skatole derivatives (entries 1 and 8, Table 1). In the heteroaryl series, the thienyl product **13f**, obtained by an inverted partner route, is unexceptional in terms of greater C-2 over C-3 acidity,²⁰ the pyridyl case **13g** follows previous observations on deprotonation site selectivity,²⁷ and the isoquinoline derivative **13h** shows presumably the result of great heteroring C–H acidity and/or CIPE alignment over the alternate *peri*-position.

To further advance synthetic utility, the application of the directed remote metalation (DreM) concept^{5,8b} was tested on several carbamoyl-translocated skatole products **11a** and **11b** (Scheme 2). After a not unexpected failure at an attempt to affect a one-pot procedure by subjection of a solution of the initially formed anion corresponding to the migration product **11a** to treatment with additional LDA,²⁸ this reaction solution was treated with Boc anhydride, and product **15a** was subjected to reaction with LiTMP to give the benzo[*a*] carbazole **16a** in 88% yield (based on recovered **11a**).^{29,30} The corresponding *m*-tolyl series, **11b** → **15b** → **16b**, gave, not surprisingly, a less synthetically useful result.

In a further enhancement of synthetic utility (Scheme 3), the 2-arylindoles **14a** and **14g** were protected as the corresponding Boc derivatives **17a** and **17b**, and the isolated products were subjected to LDA conditions as above to

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(25) In some cases (entries 6 and 7), the corresponding boropinacولات were isolated and gave, upon cross coupling, better yields of products. This may be due to the more robust nature and easier handling of the boropinacولات; see: Abaraca, B.; Ballesteros, R.; Blanco, F.; Bouillon, A.; Collot, V.; Dominguez, J.-R.; Lancelot, J.-C.; Rault, S. *Tetrahedron* **2004**, *60*, 4887.

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(28) The resulting N-anion is expected to deacidify the already weakly acidic 3-methyl hydrogens. The indole C-3 methyl hydrogen acidity is expected to be lower than the corresponding C-2 acidity on the basis of previous results (Naruse, Y.; Ito, Y.; Inagaki, S. *J. Org. Chem.* **1991**, *56*, 2256), and our observation that deprotonation of 1,2,3-trimethylindole followed by methyl iodide quench affords 1,3-dimethyl-2-ethylindole (95% yield; Zhao, Y.; Snieckus, V. Unpublished results).

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(21) The structure of **11i** was confirmed by 2D NMR, see the Supporting Information.

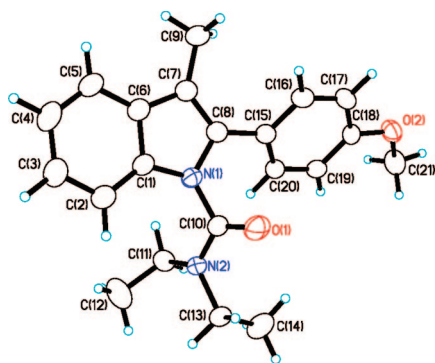


Figure 1. ORTEP view of compound **10e** with atomic numbering scheme.

afford the indeno[1,2-*b*]indoles **18a** and the corresponding aza derivative **18b** in 78% and 35% yields, respectively. Interestingly, since, to the best of our knowledge, direct Friedel–Crafts reaction of the carboxylic acids corresponding to **17a,b**-type compounds has not been reported, the above DreM route may serve as a useful method for the preparation of these somewhat unexplored ring systems.^{13,14}

Based on considerable precedent,^{8b} a carbamoyl-LDA coordination (CIPE) is suggested to play a role in the deprotonation–migration reaction.³¹ Examination of models and the X-ray crystal structure of **10e** (Figure 1), although with the normal caveat of inadequate argument based on solid-state analysis and lack of knowledge of the structure of the derived lithiated species,³² one may expect a reasonable Burgi–Dunitz angle³³ trajectory approach of an incipient 2-aryl anion toward the carbamoyl carbonyl.¹

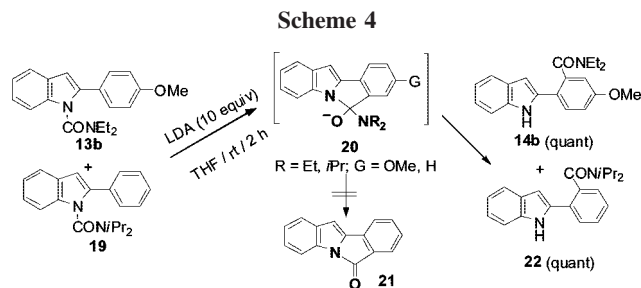
The carbamoyl translocation reaction of **13a** was conveniently followed by React IR and showed smooth disappearance of the N-CONEt₂ band at ν 1684 cm^{−1} over 1 h and the concomitant appearance of the CONEt₂ band at ν 1601 cm^{−1}. This suggests that the migration proceeds via the tetrahedral intermediate **20**, whose conversion to product rather than 6-oxo-6*H*-isoindolo[2,1-*a*]indole **21** (ν 1720 cm^{−1})³⁴ is driven by strain and indole N-anion leaving group propensity.^{35,36} As a test of intramolecularity of the migration, a crossover experiment was executed (Scheme 4). Thus, treatment of a 1:1 mixture of **13b** and **19** under the standard LDA conditions afforded **14b** and **22** in quantitative conversions. Although the expected

(30) Since compounds **16a,b** were found to be unstable, they were transformed into their triflate **16c** and acetate **16d** derivatives, respectively, for characterization; see the Supporting Information.

(31) For a metal–halogen exchange driven DreM reaction, see: Ruiz, J.; Ardeo, A.; Ignacio, R.; Sotomayor, N.; Lete, E. *Tetrahedron* **2005**, *61*, 3311.

(32) For enlightening work on DMG-based *ortho*-lithiated aromatics, see: (a) Singh, K. J.; Collum, D. B. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2006**, *128*, 13753. (b) Ma, Y.; Collum, D. B. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2007**, *129*, 14818. (c) Clayden, J.; Davies, R. P.; Hendy, M. A.; Snaith, R.; Wheatley, A. E. H. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed.* **2001**, *40*, 1238. For synthetic chemists, an essential tutorial and review on LDA-mediated reactions has appeared: (d) Collum, D. B.; McNeil, A. J.; Ramirez, A. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed.* **2007**, *46*, 2007.

(33) (a) Burgi, H. B.; Dunitz, J. D.; Lehn, J.-M.; Wipff, G. *Tetrahedron* **1974**, *30*, 1563. (b) Burgi, H. B.; Dunitz, J. D. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **1987**, *109*, 2924.



rate differences in the migration of **13b** and **19** were qualitatively observed, this result nevertheless supports an intramolecular pathway for the *N*-carbamoyl translocation reaction.

In conclusion, a new and general anionic *N*-carbamoyl migration, **10**, **13** → **11**, **14** has been added to the tool box of synthetic carbanionic aromatic chemistry (Scheme 1).³⁷ This reaction offers an alternative to direct cross-coupling approaches to 2-arylindoles¹⁶ which may be undermined by steric hindrance effects¹⁶ and provides products **11** and **14**, useful for further DoM and DreM reactions as well as additional anionic technology for the synthesis of benzocarbazoles (**16a,b**)³⁸ and an anionic route to indeno[1,2-*b*]indole (**18a**) and azaindeno[1,2-*b*]indole (**18b**).

Acknowledgment. We thank NSERC Canada for continuing support via the Discovery Grant program and Merck Frosst Canada for an unrestricted grant. Z.Z.D. is grateful to Queen's University for fellowships. A.J. was an NSERC Undergraduate Research Summer Assistant (USRA) awardee (2005), and I.P. was a visiting student from Universität Münster (summer 2006). We are grateful to Dr. Francoise Sauriol³⁹ for assistance with NMR spectra determination and Dr. Ruiyao Wang³⁹ for X-ray crystal structure analysis of compound **10e**. We warmly thank Frontier Scientific, Inc., for providing a number of boronic acids, which greatly assisted this methodological study.

Note Added in Proof. For a more direct approach to *N*-carbamoyl-2,3-diphenylindoles, see: Leogane, O.; Lebel, H. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed.* **2008**, *47*, 350.

Supporting Information Available: Experimental procedures and characterization of new compounds. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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(34) (a) Itahara, T. *Synthesis* **1979**, *2*, 151. (b) For an intramolecular aerobic oxidative coupling synthesis, see: Dwight, T. A.; Rue, N. R.; Charyk, D.; Josselyn, R.; DeBof, B. *Org. Lett.* **2007**, *9*, 3137.

(35) For React IR evidence of DreM paths to fluorenones, see: Alessi, M.; Larkin, A. L.; Ogilvie, K. A.; Green, L. A.; Lai, S.; Lopez, S.; Snieckus, V. *J. Org. Chem.* **2007**, *75*, 1588.

(36) Interestingly, in a recent report, LDA treatment of *N*-pivaloyl 2-phenylindole has been shown not lead to the analogous migration but loss of the pivaloyl group. Although a rationale was not given, this result may be due to its less favorable equilibrium to the alkoxide tetrahedral intermediate and poorer coordinating and hence metalating properties of the pivaloyl compared to carbamoyl and perhaps Boc groups; see: Avendaño, C.; Sánchez, J. D.; Menéndez, J. C. *Synlett* **2005**, *1*, 107.

(37) Attempts to effect the analogous migration using the indole *N*-phosphodiimide (*N*-P(O)(NR₂)₂) derivative corresponding to **13a** under the same LDA conditions failed: Zhao, Z.; Snieckus, V. Unpublished results.

(38) Although yields of products from the present and previous route¹¹ are comparable, different phenolic benzocarbazole isomers (C-4 vs C-3) are obtained.

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