Stereoselective Construction of Substituted Chromans by Palladium-Catalyzed Cyclization of **Propargylic Carbonates with** 2-(2-Hydroxyphenyl)acetates

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Received August 24, 2009

ORGANIC LETTERS 2009 Vol. 11, No. 20

4752-4755

ABSTRACT



Highly substituted chromans have been constructed in a highly stereoselective manner by a palladium-catalyzed reaction of propargylic carbonates with 2-(2-hydroxyphenyl)acetates. Enantioselective reactions also successfully proceeded to give the optically active chromans with high enantioselectivity.

Transition-metal-catalyzed reactions of propargylic compounds have received considerable attention and have been extensively studied as a result of their versatile and specific reactivity.¹ The palladium-catalyzed reaction of propargylic compounds with soft nucleophiles is one of the most successful chemical processes developed to date.²⁻⁵ For example, a substrate having two nucleophilic moieties within the molecule reacted with propargylic carbonate via palladium catalysis to generate the π -allylpalladium intermediate, which further reacted with the other nucleophilic part intramolecularly to afford the cyclized product (Scheme 1). In our studies on the palladiumcatalyzed reaction of propargylic compounds with soft nucleophiles,^{4e,5} we focused on the nucleophilic activity of 2-(2-hydroxyphenyl)acetates. By introducing a nucleophilic

oxygen and a carbon moiety within the substrate, we thought that substituted chromans, common structures in many pharmaceutical and agricultural compounds,⁶ could be constructed in one step. Herein, we describe the palladium-catalyzed reaction of propargylic carbonates 1 with 2-(2-hydroxyphenyl)acetates 2, in which functionalized chromans 3 have been constructed in a highly stereoselective manner (Scheme 2).

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Scheme 1. Reactivity of Propargylic Compounds with Soft Nucleophiles



Scheme 2. Palladium-Catalyzed Reaction of Propargylic Carbonates 1 with 2-(2-Hydroxyphenyl)acetates 2



The initial reactions were attempted using 1,3-diphenylprop-2-ynyl methyl carbonate (1a) and methyl 2-(2-hydroxyphenyl)acetate (2a). When 1a and 2a were subjected to the reaction in the presence of 5 mol % $Pd_2(dba)_3$ CHCl₃ and 20 mol % 1,1'-bis(diphenylphosphino)-ferrocene (DPPF) in dioxane at 120 °C for 5 min, the substituted chroman **3aa** containing the *trans* stereochemistry with the (*Z*)-alkenyl moiety was obtained in 18% yield as a single stereoisomer (Table 1, entry 1). After experimenting with various solvents and ligands (entries 2–6), we found that the yield of **3aa** was dramatically improved to 99% when the reaction was carried out in DMSO (entry 3). The structure of the resulting product **3aa** was confirmed by an X-ray crystallographic analysis of the carboxylic acid **4**, which was prepared by hydrolysis of **3aa** (Scheme 3).

Having identified a useful set of reaction conditions, we next carried out a study of the substrate scope (Table 2). Benzyl 2-(2-hydroxyphenyl)acetate (**2b**) successfully reacted with **1a** to produce the chroman **3ab** in 99% yield (entry 1). When the reaction of substrates **2c** and **2d** having a methoxy group at the 2- and 4-positions on the benzene ring was carried out, the corresponding products **3ac** and **3ad** were



Scheme 3. Hydrolysis of 3aa



obtained in 80% and 88% yields, respectively (entries 2 and 3). The naphthyl-substituted substrate **2e** also reacted with **1a** to deliver the product **3ae** in 51% yield (entry 4). The reaction of di-4-fluorophenyl-substituted propargylic carbonate **1b** with **2b** uneventfully proceeded to afford the chroman **3bb** in 66% yield (entry 5). Similarly, the propargylic acetate **1c**,⁷ containing two 4-methoxyphenyl groups, was converted to the corresponding product **3cb** in 95% yield (entry 6). Since in all cases the resulting products **3aa–3ae** and **3bb–3cb** had been obtained as a single stereoisomer, it was determined that the reaction had proceeded in a highly stereoselective manner.

Next we evaluated the reactivity of the propargylic carbonate 1d, which has no substituent at the terminal alkynyl position (Scheme 4). Thus the reaction of 1d with 2a proceeded to give the desired chroman 3da in 26% yield, along with the isomerized product 5 in 26% yield (Scheme 4).⁸

A plausible mechanism, which may account for the highly stereoselective nature of this process, is shown in Scheme 5. On reacting with the palladium catalyst, the propargylic carbonate 1 undergoes decarboxylation to give the π -prop-

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⁽⁷⁾ When the corresponding propargylic carbonate was examined, the reaction resulted in the decomposition of the substrate, presumably because of the instability of the carbonate moiety caused by the electron-donating effect of the methoxy groups.

⁽⁸⁾ We also attempted other non-symmetrical substrates such as aryland alkyl-substituted substrates at the terminal alkynyl and propargylic position, but complex mixtures including regio- and stereoisomers were produced in each cases.

Table 2. Reactions Using Various Substrates 1a-c and 2b-d



^a The reaction was carried out in the presence of 2 equiv of K₃PO₄.

Scheme 4. Reaction of 1d with 2a



argylpalladium complex 6,⁹ which further reacts with the 2-(2-hydroxyphenyl)acetate **2** to lead to the *anti*- π -allylpalladium intermediate **8**. Complex **8** is then subjected to the intramolecular attack of the enolate to produce the chroman **3**, which contains the *trans* stereochemistry and the (*Z*)-alkenyl moiety. The observed high diastereoselectivity is

likely the result of steric factors that influence the relative energies of the competing transition states **TS A** and **TS B**. It was expected that the transition state **TS A**, leading to the product **3**, would have lower energy because of the absence of steric repulsion between the ester and aryl groups that is present in **TS B**, which would furnish the diastereomer **3'**.¹⁰

We next turned our attention to the application of this process to an enantioselective reaction. Although numbers of asymmetric reactions of allylic compounds with nucleophiles are known, examples of palladium-catalyzed asymmetric reactions using propargylic compounds with nucleophiles are limited.^{4b,c,5c} In the reaction we designed, an asymmetric center is formed via the achiral π -allylpalladium intermediate **8**, and it is anticipated that the absolute configuration of the newly formed stereogenic center could be controlled by chiral palladium catalysts. To achieve this enantioselective process, we first examined the reactions of **1a** with **2b** under various conditions (Table 3). When the reaction was carried out in the presence of 5 mol % Pd₂(dba)₃·CHCl₃, 20 mol % (*S*)-BINAP in DMSO at 120 °C, the optically active chroman (3*R*,4*S*)-**3ab** formed in 62% yield with 71% ee (entry 1).¹¹

OCO2Me Ρh 5 mol % Pd₂(dba)₃·CHCl₃ 1a 20 mol % chiral ligand DMSO, 5 min OH ĒO₂Bn CO₂Bn (3R,4S)-3ab 2h temp (°C) yield (%) ee (%)^a entrv ligand 1 (S)-BINAP 120 62 712 (S)-Tol-BINAP 120 5968 3 (S)-H₈-BINAP 120 78 70 4 (S)-DM-BINAP 120 53525(S)-SEGPHOS 120 5191

Table 3. Enantioselective Cyclization of 1a with 2b

 a Enantiomeric excess was determined by HPLC using a chiral column. b The reaction was carried out for 3 h.

80

60

55

59

90

96

6

 7^b

(S)-SEGPHOS

(S)-SEGPHOS

After several attempts using various chiral phosphine ligands (entries 2–5), we discovered that when (*S*)-SEG-PHOS was used, the enantiomeric excess increased to 91% (entry 5). Better results were obtained under low reaction temperature (entries 6 and 7), and (3R,4S)-**3ab** was produced in 96% ee by carrying out the reaction at 60 °C for 3 h (entry 7).

In conclusion, the effort described above has led to the development of the palladium-catalyzed reaction of propar-

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⁽¹⁰⁾ As another hypothesis, the initially produced *cis*-product 3' was epimerized to the thermodynamically preferred *trans* product 3.

⁽¹¹⁾ The absolute configuration was determined to be 3R, 4S by Kusumi's PGME method: Nagai, Y.; Kusumi, T. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1995**, *36*, 1853. See Supporting Information.

Scheme 5. Proposed Reaction Mechanism



gylic carbonates with 2-(2-hydroxyphenyl)acetates. The process produces substituted chromans having the *trans* stereochemistry with the (*Z*)-alkenyl moiety in a highly stereoselective manner. Enantioselective reactions successfully proceeded in the presence of SEGPHOS to give the optically active chromans with high enantioselectivity. Biologically active compounds having similar chroman structures have been reported,⁶ and our methodology would provide a new and significant protocol for the synthesis of these compounds.

Acknowledgment. This study was supported in part by a Grant-in-Aid for the Encouragement of Young Scientists (B) from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and the Program for the Promotion of Basic and Applied Research for Innovations in the Bio-oriented Industry (BRAIN).

Supporting Information Available: Experimental procedures and compound characterization data, including CIF file. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

OL901964Z