Communication

Palladium-Catalyzed Chemoselective Catellani ortho-Arylation of Iodopyrroles: Rapid Total Synthesis of Rhazinal

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Palladium-Catalyzed Chemoselective Catellani *ortho*-Arylation of Iodopyrroles: Rapid Total Synthesis of Rhazinal

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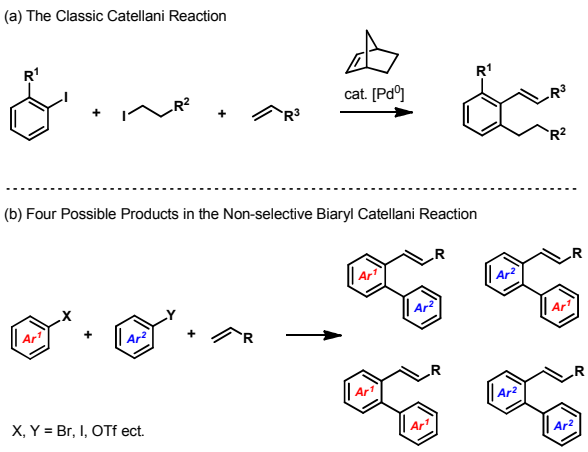
Supporting Information Placeholder

ABSTRACT: A palladium-catalyzed chemoselective Catellani reaction of iodopyrroles was developed. The rare chemoselectivity between two different aryl halides was realized by optimizing kinetics of the different steps of this multicomponent process. The new developed method led to a rapid synthesis of rhazinal in a high efficient manner.

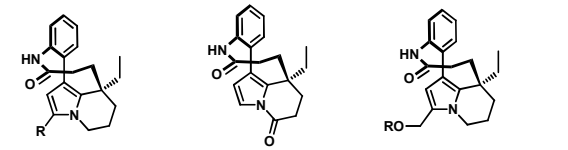
Transition metal-catalyzed cross-coupling reactions have been proven to be highly beneficial transformations for organic synthesis and revolutionized synthesis planning in natural products total synthesis. Transition-metal-catalyzed domino or multi-component reactions enable the assembly of complex molecules in a single step with a rapid build-up of complexity.[1] Among them, the Catellani reaction stands out as a powerful tool to construct poly-functionalized aromatic rings.[2] Contributions from the Catellani,[3] Lautens[4] and other groups[5] expanded the utility of this transformation to various structurally divergent poly-functionalized aromatic compounds. Typically, a combination of an aryl halide and an alkyl halide is necessary to circumvent chemoselectivity problems (Scheme 1a). The reaction with two different aryl halides has been rarely reported potentially due to poor chemoselectivity.[3a-c,4f] This point is illustrated in Scheme 1b, showing the formation of four theoretically possible biaryl products when two distinct aryl halides are used as substrates. Herein we report an application of an efficient chemoselective norbornene-mediated Catellani reaction in a concise total synthesis of rhazinal with two different aryl halides as the reaction components.

Rhazinilam family of natural products represent a class of compounds with interesting biological activity. (−)-Rhazinilam (**1**) was first isolated in 1965 from Mesodinus austrilia,[6] and later from *Rhazya stricta* Decaisne[7] and *Kopsia singapurensis*.[8] (−)-Rhazinal (**2**)[9], (−)-rhazinicine (**3**)[10] and kopsiyunnanines (**4**-**6**)[11] were isolated in 1999, 2001, and 2009, respectively. It was found that (−)-rhazinilam (**1**), which mimics the effects of both vinblastine and Taxol™, could induce an irreversible assembly of tubulin and inhibit cold-induced disassembly of microtubules.[12] It showed strong cytotoxicity towards various cancer cell lines in vitro, while having no activity in vivo, which led to several studies directed at its analogue synthesis and their biological evaluation.[13]

Scheme 1. Catellani Reaction



Scheme 2. Rhazinilam Family Natural Products

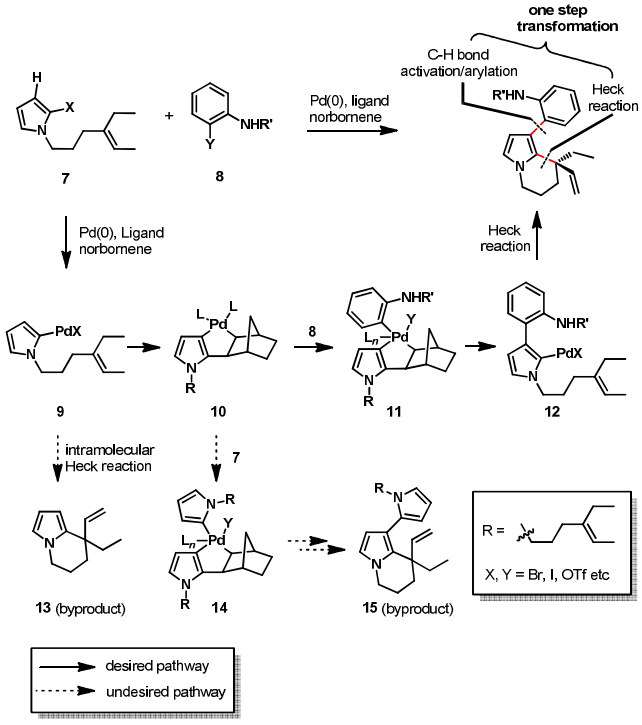


Structurally, compounds in the rhazinilam family share a tetracyclic framework which contains an axial chiral pyrrole aniline biaryl fragment and a strained nine-membered lactam bearing a quaternary carbon center. The unusual structure provided a popular platform for the development of new strategies and methods, and more than ten syntheses in this area have been reported to date.[14] Carbon-hydrogen bond functionalization strategy was adopted by the groups of Sames, Trauner and Gaunt;[15] while Nelson and co-workers constructed the quaternary carbon center via a gold-catalyzed allene cyclization.[16] During the synthesis of (-)-rhazinal, Banwell and co-workers constructed the tetrahydroindolizine fragment via asymmetric imminium-ion catalysis.[17] Zakarian's synthesis features a Heck-type transannular cyclization of a 13-membered lactam, where the six- and nine-membered rings as well as a quaternary carbon center

were constructed in one step through axial-to-point chirality transfer.[18]

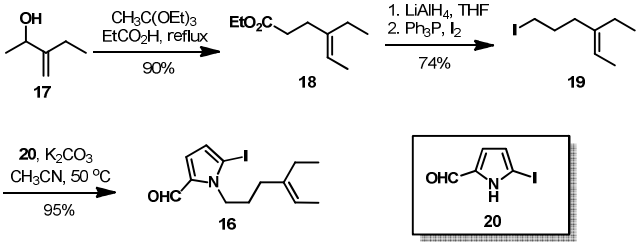
The key features of our own synthetic plan are listed in Scheme 3. One phenyl-pyrrole bond and one six-membered ring are projected to be formed in one step via the norbornene-mediated Catellani reaction. The pivotal issue is to match the reactivity of 2-halopyrrole and 2-haloaniline components. By tuning the nature of substituents and halogen atoms, as well as reaction conditions, we expect that 1) during the initial oxidative addition step, palladium(0) will react preferentially with aryl halides **7** rather than **8**; 2) pyrrolylpalladium species **9** would undergo the insertion reaction with norbornene faster than the intramolecular Heck reaction giving undesired product **13**;[19] and 3) once the carbopalladacycle formed, the palladium(II) species **10**[20] will selectively react with **8** rather than **7**, which will give the undesired bipyrrole compound **15**. Reductive elimination of **11**, followed by norbornene release, should deliver **12**, which is expected to undergo the intramolecular Heck reaction affording the fully assembled core structure.[21,22] Thus, a major goal of the study was to identify reaction components that would have optimal relative kinetics in the various steps of the multistep process, driving the reaction toward desired cross-coupling/Heck product.

Scheme 3. Proposed Key Transformation in the Synthesis of Rhazinilam Family Natural Products



Preliminary screening experiments with different substituted 2-halopyrroles revealed that 2-iodopyrrole with an electron-withdrawing substituent on the aromatic ring is necessary for successful cross-coupling (For details see Supporting Information).[23] As a result, the easily available compound **16** was chosen as our model substrate, whose synthesis was listed in Scheme 4. Starting from the known alcohol **17**, which was synthesized from acetylacetone following Amri's procedure[24] (For details see Supporting Information), the alkyl fragment **19** could be obtained via a routine three-step manipulation: Johnson-Claisen rearrangement,[25] reduction and iodination reactions. Alkylation of the known iodopyrrole **20**[26] with iodide **19** delivered the model compound in excellent yield.

Scheme 4. Synthesis of Model Compound 16



With **16** in hands, we conducted the non-symmetric biaryl coupling/Heck reaction with various 2-haloaniline derivatives and their analogues (Figure 1). All the reactions of **16** with **8b-i** gave either the direct Heck-type product **22** or an uncharacterized dimer of **16**. Fortunately, heating the mixture **16** with 1-bromo-2-nitrobenzene **8a** in the presence of palladium dichloride, triphenylphosphine, norbornene in acetonitrile gave the biaryl product **21** in 11% yield as along with 10% of the direct Heck cyclization product **22** (Table 1, entry 1).[40] The screening of the solvents found that the reaction in dioxane could give the desired product in 77% yield, with no significant amount of **22** being detected (entries 2-4). A similar yield (72%) was obtained when tri(2-furyl)phosphine was used as a ligand (entry 5), while the reaction became sluggish when bidentate phosphine ligands such as BINAP or dppe were used (entries 6 and 7). Different bases were also screened and it was found that K_2CO_3 is also an effective base (entry 8). The reaction with KO*t*-Bu as the base led to decomposition of iodopyrrole substrate **16** (entry 9) while with 2,6-lutidine resulted in very poor conversion (entry 10).

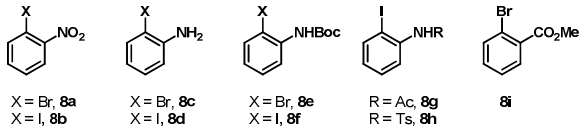
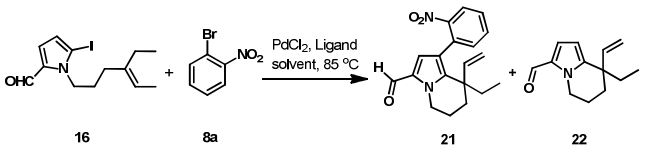


Figure 1. 2-Haloaniline Derivatives and Their Analogues

Initially we tried to introduce the carboxyl group via the ruthenium-catalyzed alkene cross-metathesis with acrylates. However, presumably due to steric hindrance of neopentylic vinyl group under various conditions with Grubbs 2nd or Hoveyda-Grubbs 2nd catalysts, alkene **21** is either unstable or inert. After unsuccessful functionalization of the terminal C=C double bond by various methods including hydroboration,[27] hydrozirconation[28] and hydrocarbonylation,[29] we redesigned our approach to include the desired carboxy group in the precursor to the key cascade metal-catalyzed process. Thus, a group of substrates **26a-e** were synthesized (Scheme 5), which could be accessed from the known acid **23** via three to five-step manipulation.

Table 1. Non-symmetric Biaryl Coupling of 16 with 1-Bromo-2-nitrobenzene (8a)[a]

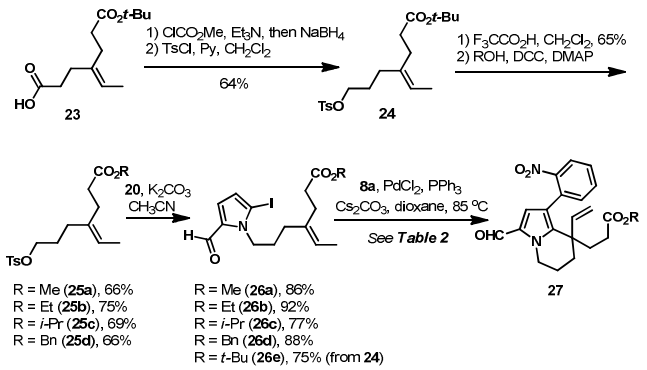


16 8a 21 22

Entry	Ligand	Base (2.5 equiv)	solvent	Yield of **21** /%[b]
1	PPh_3	Cs_2CO_3	CH_3CN	11[c,d]
2	PPh_3	Cs_2CO_3	DMF	<2
3	PPh_3	Cs_2CO_3	toluene	67
4	PPh_3	Cs_2CO_3	dioxane	77
5	$P(2\text{-furyl})_3$	Cs_2CO_3	dioxane	72
6	*rac*-BINAP	Cs_2CO_3	dioxane	<2[e]
7	dppe	Cs_2CO_3	dioxane	35[d]
8	PPh_3	K_2CO_3	dioxane	51
9	PPh_3	KO*t*-Bu	dioxane	<2
10	PPh_3	2,6-lutidine	dioxane	<2[e]

[a] The reaction was conducted with **16** (0.1 mmol), **8a** (6 equiv), $PdCl_2$ (10 mol%), ligand (20 mol%) (for *rac*-BINAP and dppe, 10 mol%), base (2.5 equiv) and norbornene (6 equiv) at 85 °C. [b] Isolated yields. [c] The reaction was conducted at 81 °C, **22** was isolated in 10% yield. [d] an unknown dimer of **16** was also isolated. [e] Crude ^1H NMR indicated most of SM unchanged. BINAP = 2,2'-bis(diphenylphosphino)-1,1'-binaphthyl, dppe = 1, 2-bis(diphenylphosphino)ethane.

Scheme 5. Synthesis of Compound 27



23 24 27

Selective reduction of the known acid **23**[18] to alcohol, followed by tosylation gave **24** in 64% yield. Deprotection of *tert*-butyl ester with trifluoroacetic acid, subsequent esterification and alkylation would give the desired key precursors **26** (Scheme 5). To our disappointment, under identical conditions for the cascade metal-catalyzed process, the methyl ester substrate **26a** gave only a trace amount of the desired product with poor conversion (~50%) (Table 2, entry 1). However, 40% yield of the cross-coupling/Heck product **27b** was obtained when ethyl ester **26b** was used (entry 2). In order to obtain more information about this remote substituent effect, three additional substrates **26c-e** were prepared in the same manner. Interestingly the reaction of isopropyl (**26c**) or benzyl ester (**26d**) afforded the cyclization products in 66% and 33% yields, respectively (entries 3 and 4). The best results were obtained when *tert*-butyl ester **26e** was used. Under our standard conditions, the reaction delivered the desired product **27e** in 85% yield (entry 5). Currently, the origin of this unusual substituent effect is unclear.

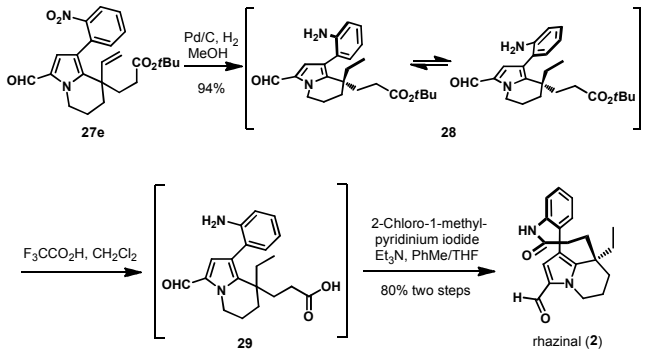
With the fully functionalized core structure **27e** in hands, the synthesis of rhazinal (**2**) could be completed in three steps (Scheme 6). In the presence of Pd/C at three atmosphere pressure of hydrogen, both the nitro group and the double bond could be reduced to deliver **28** in high yield. Compound **28** showed a pair of atropisomers (~1:1) due to the slow rotation of pyrrole-phenyl bond at room temperate in $CDCl_3$, however, this did not affect the final cyclization reaction. Removal of the *tert*-butyl group under standard acidic conditions afforded amino acid **29**, which could be smoothly cyclized to afford macrolactam rhazinal (**2**) with 2-chloro-1-methylpyridinium iodide (Mukaiyama reagent)[30] in a diluted solution. The ^1H and ^{13}C NMR data of synthetic **2** is identical to those of the natural or previous synthesized rhazinal.

Table 2. Remote Substituent Effect of Non-symmetric Biaryl Coupling of 26 with 1-Bromo-2-nitrobenzene[a]

Entry	R (**26**)	Yield of **27** /%[b]
1	Me (**26a**)	<5 (**27a**)[c]
2	Et (**26b**)	40 (**27b**)
3	*i*-Pr (**26c**)	66 (**27c**)
4	Bn (**26d**)	33 (**27d**)
5	*t*-Bu (**26e**)	85 (**27e**)

[a] The reaction was conducted at 0.28-0.33 mmol scale, for details see Supporting Information. [b] Isolated yields. [c] The reaction is about 50% conversion on the analysis of crude mixture.

Scheme 6. Complete the Synthesis of Rhazinal (2)



27e 28 29 rhazinal (2)

In summary, a concise and efficient synthesis of rhazinal was developed. The synthesis features the tandem Catellani-type *ortho*-arylation/intramolecular Heck reaction which enables access to the core structure in a rapid and modular fashion. In this case, a rare chemoselectivity between two different aryl halides was realized by optimizing kinetics of the different steps of this multicomponent process. This observation provides additional insight for extending the utility of Catellani reaction in complex molecule synthesis.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information Experimental procedures, characterization data, ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra for all new com-

pounds. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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Author Contributions

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Notes

The authors declared no competing financial interest.

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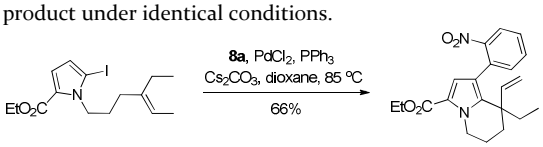

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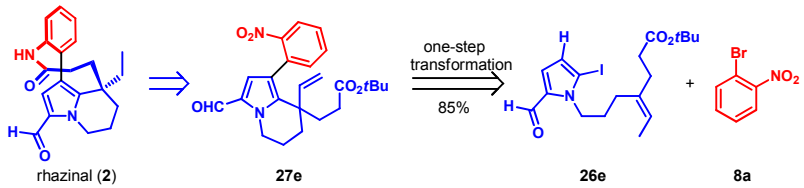
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rhazinal (2)
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27e
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transformation
85%
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NO2
8a