Palladium-Catalyzed Isomerization of *exo*-Methylenic Allylic Alcohols

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Abstract: Treatment of allylic alcohols containing a 1,1-disubstituted alkene with a palladium catalyst and hydrogen gas (1 bar) results in facile isomerization to their corresponding trisubstituted (E)-allylic alcohols, along with small amounts of the corresponding hydrogenated products.

Keywords: alkenes; allylic alcohols; hydrogenation; isomerization; palladium

The ability of transition metal complexes to catalyze the isomerization of olefinic compounds is well documented, with the alkene bonds of hetero-allylic systems representing a common target. Selected examples include: transition metal-catalyzed conversion of allylic alcohols to saturated aldehydes or ketones;^[1] nickel-catalyzed isomerization of O-allyl ethers to enol ethers;^[2] rhodium-catalyzed isomerization of allyl silyl ethers to silyl enol ethers;^[3] rutheniummediated conversion of N-allylic amines to their corresponding enamines;^[4] iron-catalyzed isomerization of N-allylamides to enamides;^[5] ruthenium-catalyzed alkene migration of allylic sulfides, sulfones and sulfoxides to afford their corresponding vinylic species;^[6] palladium-catalyzed formation of α,β -unsaturated esters from unconjugated species;^[7] and rutheniumcatalyzed deconjugation of α,β -unsaturated esters.^[8] Consequently, we now report herein on the palladium-catalyzed hydrogenolytic isomerization of exomethylenic allylic alcohols to give their corresponding trisubstituted (E)-allylic isomers in good yield.

We have recently introduced the concept of using temporary stereocentres to efficiently relay stereochemical information to create remote stereogenic centres.^[9] As part of an investigation employing hydroxyl-directed catalytic hydrogenation reactions for the asymmetric synthesis of chiral α -methyl aldehydes,^[10] we required authentic samples of aldol diastereoisomers **3a** and **3b**. Therefore, *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohol **1** in isopropyl alcohol (IPA) was treated with 3 mol% Pd/C under one bar of hydrogen for three hours, which did not afford the expected diastereoisomeric hydrogenated products **3a/3b**, but instead gave the isomerized trisubstituted (*E*)-allylic alcohol **2** in >95% yield (Scheme 1). This result was unexpected, since palladium catalysts had been used previously to reduce the alkene functionality of related allylic alcohols,^[11] as well as catalyzing isomerization to their corresponding ketones.^[12]

This type of isomerization reaction has been proposed to explain the poor diastereoselectivity observed in rhodium-mediated hydrogenation reactions of related *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohols at low hydrogen pressure.^[13] In this case, it was demonstrated that a cationic rhodium catalyst was capable of facilitating the isomerization reaction to afford mixtures of starting *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohol, its corresponding trisubstituted allylic alcohol and a β -keto imide.



Scheme 1. Palladium-catalyzed isomerization of *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohol 1 to afford trisubstituted (E)-allylic alcohol 2.

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 Contrastingly, in our case, palladium-mediated isomerization of allylic alcohol **1** had occurred to selectively afford trisubstituted (*E*)-allylic alcohol **2**, with retention of its β -hydroxy stereocentre, as the major product.^[14]

The mechanism of this palladium-catalyzed isomerization reaction was then investigated.^[15] Firstly, it was shown that hydrogen was necessary for the isomerization reaction to occur, since treatment of 1 with 3 mol% Pd/C in IPA under nitrogen gave only unreacted starting material after 24 h. A series of deuterium labelling experiments were then carried out to determine where deuterium would be incorporated into 2. Carrying out the isomerization reaction in IPA- d_8 only resulted in exchange of the hydroxylic proton, with no other deuterium atoms being incorporated into trisubstituted allylic alcohol 2. Treatment of 1 with 3 mol% Pd/C in IPA under a balloon of deuterium gas for three hours resulted in very little isomerization occurring (<10% conversion), which we proposed was due to the presence of a large kinetic isotope effect. Consequently, this deuterium isomerization reaction was repeated over a period of 16 h which resulted in 50% conversion of aldol 1 to its isomerized aldol 2. ¹H and ²H NMR spectroscopic analysis revealed that two deuterium atoms had been incorporated into the trisubstituted allylic alcohol d_2 -2 (100% deuterium incorporation at allylic methyl position, 70% deuterium incorporation at vinylic position).^[16] From these results a potential mechanism was proposed, in which a palladium deuteride species first adds across the alkene functionality of 1 to afford intermediate d-4, which selectively eliminates a palladium hydride species to afford the thermodynamically favoured trisubstituted alkene d-2.^[17] Hydrogen-deuterium exchange of the palladium catalyst, followed by addition of palladium deuteride to d-2, then forms d_2 -5, which eliminates a palladium hydride species to afford the observed trisubstituted allylic alcohol d_2 -2 (Figure 1).^[18] It was also shown that $3 \text{ mol}\% \text{ Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ could be used to catalyze formation of trisubstituted allylic alcohol 2, thus enabling this isomerization reaction to be carried out under either heterogeneous or homogeneous catalytic conditions.

It was then decided to optimize this palladium-catalyzed isomerization reaction using a pair of simplified *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohols **6a**, **6b** as substrates (Table 1). Treatment of allylic alcohol **6a** with 10 mol% Pd(OAc)₂ in IPA under one bar of hydrogen^[19] for 20 min successfully afforded trisubstituted allylic alcohol **7a** [(*E*):(*Z*)=8:1] and the fully hydrogenated alcohols **8a/9a**^[20] in a ratio of 77:23 (Table 1, entry 1). Evidently, the alkene bonds of allylic alcohols **6a/7a** were more susceptible to hydrogenation than the alkene bonds of allylic alcohols **1/2**, which we presumed was due to the presence of their less



Figure 1. Palladium-catalyzed isomerization of *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohol **1** to afford trisubstituted (*E*)-allylic alcohol **2**.

 Table 1. Palladium-catalyzed isomerization of *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohols.



Entry	Substrate	Solvent/ Additive	Time [min]	Product ratio [%] ^[a]	
				7 ^[b]	8/9
1 ^[c]	6a	IPA	20	77 (8:1)	23
2 ^[c,d]	6b	IPA	60	55 (9:1)	15
3 ^[c]	6b	IPA/Cs ₂ CO ₃	60	80 (14:1)	20
4 ^[c]	6b	EtOAc	90	83 (12:1)	7
5 ^[e]	6a	MeCN/Cs ₂ CO ₃	15	90 (21:1)	10

^[a] Ratios determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopic analysis.

^[b] Numbers in brackets denote (E):(Z) ratios.

^[c] Reactions carried out using Pd(OAc)₂ at room temperature.

^[d] Remaining mass balance comprised of (2-methyloctyl)benzene **10**.

^[e] Reaction carried out using Pd(OH)₂/C at 0°C.

		R^{1} R^{3} R^{3}	Pd(OH) ₂ /- <u>H₂</u> M	C (10 mol%) (1 bar) /IeCN	R^{1}	OH └────────────────────────────────────	R^2 OH R^1	R ³
		6a – k			7a – k		8a – k/9a – k	
Entry		Allylic alcohol 6	Temp. [°C] ^[a]	Time [min]		Product r 7 ^[c]	atio [%] ^[b]	8/9 ^[20]
1	6a	n-C ₅ H ₁₁	0	15	7a : 90 (21:1)	n-C ₅ H ₁₁	8a/9a : 10	n-C ₅ H ₁₁
2	6b	<i>n</i> -C ₅ H ₁₁ Ph	20	30	7b : 87 (8:1)	<i>n</i> -C ₅ H ₁₁ Ph	8b/9b : 13	<i>n</i> -C ₅ H ₁₁ Ph
3	6c	<i>n</i> -C ₅ H ₁₁ <i>i</i> -Pr	20	40	7c : 96 (17:1)	n-C ₅ H ₁₁ <i>i</i> -F	o _r 8c/9c : 4	<i>n</i> -C ₅ H ₁₁ <i>i</i> -Pr
4	6d	<i>n</i> -C ₅ H ₁₁ Bn	0	60	7d : 80 (7:1)		8d/9d : 20	<i>n</i> -C ₅ H ₁₁ OH Bn
5 ^[d]	6e	OH N	20	15	7e : 83 (10:1)	OH N	8e/9e : 17	OH
6 ^[d]	6f	OH N	20	15	7f : 83 (10:1)	OH N	8f/9f : 17	OH N
7	6g	Ph	0	60	7g : 55 (6:1)	Ph	8g/9g : 45	Ph
8	6h	Phi-Pr	20	60	7h : 75 (8:1)	Ph	8h/9h : 25	Ph
9	6i	OH CH	20	15	7i : 61	OH	8i/9i : 39	OH
10	6j	OH Bn	20	25	7j : 58	OH Bn	8j/9j : 42	OH Bn
11 ^[e]	6k	0H	20	15	7k : 65 (4:1)	0H	8k/9k : 21	0H

Table 2. Palladium-catalyzed isomerization of allylic alcohols 6a-k under hydrogenolytic conditions.

^[a] Temperature chosen to maximize yield of **7** and ensure isomerization reaction proceeded to completion within one hour.

^[b] Ratios determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopic analysis.

^[c] Numbers in brackets denote (E):(Z) ratios.

^[d] Reactions carried out in IPA because alcohols **6e/6f** are not soluble in MeCN.

^[e] Remaining mass comprised of aldehyde **11**.

sterically demanding methyl substituents. We then investigated isomerization of allylic alcohol **6b** under these conditions, which gave a 55:15:30 ratio of trisubstituted allylic alcohol **7b** [(E):(Z)=9:1], hydrogenated alcohols **8b/9b**^[20] and (2-methyloctyl)benzene

10 (Table 1, entry 2). We considered that formation of **10** might be facilitated by protonation of its hydroxy group by the IPA solvent. Consequently, we carried out the isomerization reaction in the presence of one equivalent of Cs_2CO_3 which served to completely sup-

press formation of 10, but still gave 20% of the unwanted hydrogenated alcohols 8b/9b (Table 1, entry 3). Alternatively, repeating the isomerization reaction of 6b in an aprotic polar solvent such as EtOAc resulted in only 10% of 10 being formed, as well as producing significantly less amounts of the unwanted hydrogenated alcohols **8b/9b**^[20] (7%) (Table 1, entry 4). At this stage, a full catalyst/solvent screen was carried out to maximize the yield of trisubstituted allylic alcohol 7a. This resulted in Pd(OH)₂/C in MeCN being identified as the catalyst/solvent system of choice, which in the presence of one equivalent of Cs_2CO_3 gave trisubstituted allylic alcohol **7a** in 90% yield, with only 10% of the hydrogenated alcohols **8a/9a**^[20] being formed (Table 1, entry 5).

The scope and limitation of this palladium-catalyzed isomerization reaction was then investigated by applying the optimal conditions of 10 mol% Pd(OH)₂/ C, H_2 (1 bar), Cs_2CO_3 (1 equiv.), [substrate]=1 moldm⁻³ to a range of eleven *exo*-methylenic allylic alcohols 6a-k (Table 2) in MeCN.^[21-23] These isomerization reactions gave eleven trisubstituted allylic alcohols 7a-k in moderate to high yields (55-96%) with good to excellent (E):(Z) ratios (ranging from 4:1 to 21:1),^[24] as well as producing varying amounts (4-45%) of their corresponding hydrogenated alcohol products 8a-k/9a-k.^[20] This isomerization reaction was successful for the preparation of trisubstituted allylic alcohols 7a-f bearing a range of aliphatic and aromatic substituents at their carbinol carbon, with >80% yields being obtained in each case (Table 2, entries 1-6). However, isomerization of exo-methylenic allylic alcohols 6g, 6h containing benzylic substituents at their allylic position proved less efficient, affording trisubstituted allylic alcohols 7g, 7h in 55-75% yield accompanied by significant amounts (25-45%) of hydrogenated alcohols 8g, 8h/9g, 9h (Table 2, entries 7 and 8).

Similarly, palladium-catalyzed isomerization of exomethylenic allylic alcohols 6i, 6j gave allylic alcohols 7i, 7j containing a tetrasubstituted alkene functionality in only 58-61% yield, with significant amounts of reduced alcohols 8i, 8j/9i, 9j (39-42%) being produced (Table 2, entries 9 and 10). In these cases it is likely that significant steric interactions disfavour the syn-periplanar conformation required for palladium hydride elimination to occur [see Figure 2a for formation of (E)-7i], resulting in higher proportions of the hydrogenated alcohols 8i, 8j/9i, 9j being produced. Isomerization of primary allylic alcohol 6k gave a 65% yield of trisubstituted allylic alcohol 7k, a 21% yield of its corresponding hydrogenated alcohols 8k/ $9k^{[20]}$ and a 14% yield of 2-methyloctanal 11 (Table 2, entry 11). This aldehyde is likely to be formed from palladium-catalyzed isomerization of 6k to an unstable enol which subsequently tautomerizes to the carbonyl compound. Attempts to isomerize tertiary allyl-



Figure 2. [a] Significant steric interactions disfavour the *syn*periplanar conformation required for elimination to afford (*E*)-**7i**; [b] Aldehyde **11** and tertiary allylic alcohol **12**.

ic alcohol **12** (Figure 2b) proved unsuccessful with prolonged reaction times being required to afford large amounts of its corresponding hydrogenated alcohol, with < 20% of its isomerized trisubstituted allylic alcohol being formed.

In summary, we have shown that treatment of allylic alcohols containing a 1,1-disubstituted alkene with a palladium catalyst and hydrogen gas (1 bar) results in facile isomerization to their corresponding trisubstituted allylic alcohols, along with small amounts of their corresponding hydrogenated products.

Experimental Section

Procedure for the Synthesis and Isomerization of Allylic Alcohol 6c

2-Methyleneoctanal:^[25] Into a 100-mL flask, fitted with a reflux condenser, were placed *n*-octanal (8.2 g, 64.0 mmol), dimethylamine hydrochloride (6.89 g, 84.4 mmol) and 37% aqueous formaldehyde solution (6.3 mL, 84.4 mmol). The resulting mixture was heated at 70 °C with stirring for 24 h. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction mixture was neutralized with NaHCO₃ solution and the aqueous layer extracted with hexane (3×10 mL). The organic fractions were combined, dried (MgSO₄) and the solvent removed under vacuum to afford the title compound as a colourless oil; yield: 6.9 g (77%); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ =9.47 (1H, s), 6.19–6.16 (1H, m), 5.92–5.90 (1H, m), 2.21–2.12 (2H, m), 1.44–1.14 (8H, m), 0.81 (3H, t, *J*=6.8 Hz); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ =195.2, 150.9, 134.2, 32.0, 29.3, 28.1, 28.0, 22.9, 14.4.

2-Methyl-4-methylenedecan-3-ol (6c): THF (80 mL) and i-PrMgCl (19.6 mL, 2.0 M in THF) were placed into a 250-mL round-bottom flask and the resulting solution cooled to 0°C. 2-Methyleneoctanal (5 g, 35.7 mmol) was then added dropwise. After stirring at this temperature for a further 15 min, the reaction was quenched by cautious addition of saturated potassium sodium tartrate solution, filtered through Celite® and the solvent removed under vacuum. The residue was redissolved in Et₂O (100 mL), washed successively with 1.0 M aqueous HCl (30 mL), H_2O (2×30 mL) and brine (30 mL), dried (MgSO₄) and the solvent removed under vacuum. The crude product was purified by silica gel column chromatography to afford the title compound as a colourless oil; yield: 4.54 g (69%); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): $\delta = 4.91$ (1H, s), 4.82–4.79 (1 H, m), 3.68 (1 H, d, J = 6.5 Hz), 2.07 - 1.80 (2 H, m), 1.80 - 1.80 m1.66 (1H, m), 1.47–1.16 (8H, m), 0.86 (3H, d, J=6.7 Hz),

0.82 (3H, obs. t), 0.81 (3H, d, J=6.8 Hz); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): $\delta=151.7$, 110.5, 81.5, 32.2, 31.8, 31.5, 29.7, 28.3, 23.0, 20.1, 17.7, 14.5; HR-MS (ESI): m/z=183.1739, calcd. for C₁₂H₂₄O [M⁻]:183.1749.

(*E*)-2,4-Dimethyldec-4-en-3-ol (7c)

2-Methyl-4-methylenedecan-3-ol (**6c**) (184 mg, 1 mmol) was dissolved in MeCN (0.2 mL) and then added *via* syringe to a Schlenk tube containing Pd(OH)₂/C (125.2 mg, 0.1 mmol) Pd), Cs₂CO₃ (325.8 mg, 1 mmol) in MeCN (0.8 mL) under one bar of hydrogen. The reaction mixture was then stirred at 20 °C for 40 min, filtered through Celite[®] and the solvent removed under vacuum to afford the title compound. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃); δ =5.38 (1H, t, *J*=7.1 Hz), 3.59 (1H, d, *J*=8.3 Hz), 2.11–1.98 (3H, m), 1.87–1.68 (1H, m), 1.43–1.22 (8H, m), 1.00 (3H, d, *J*=6.6 Hz), 0.91 (1H, t, *J*=6.7 Hz), 0.80 (3H, d, *J*=6.8 Hz); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ =136.6, 128.5, 84.7, 31.9, 31.5, 29.6, 22.9, 19.8, 19.2, 19.1, 14.5, 11.6; HR-MS (ESI): *m/z*=207.1732, calcd. for C₁₂H₂₄NaO [M⁺]: 207.1725.

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