

Notes

New Perspectives in Oxazole Chemistry: Synthesis and Cycloaddition Reactions of a 4-Nitro-2-phenyl Derivative¹

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Introduction

Whereas 4-nitroisoxazoles have been extensively investigated over the past century,² the corresponding oxazole derivatives remained practically unexplored in the same period,³ probably due to the discouraging results achieved by different synthetic approaches. Since the 4-position of this heterocycle is quite resistant to direct electrophilic nitration,⁴ a mercuration–iodination sequence followed by treatment of the resulting 4-halo derivative with nitrogen tetraoxide was examined with 2-methyl-5-phenyl- and 2-methyl-5-(*p*-chlorophenyl)oxazole, but the desired nitro compounds were obtained in 4–5% yields.⁵ On the other hand, although thermal isoxazole isomerization represents a well established and attractive entry into the oxazole system,⁶ flash vacuum pyrolysis (FVP) of some 5-alkyl-3-methyl-4-nitro derivatives afforded only 1-cyano-1-nitroacetone in quantitative yields.⁷

In order to probe if this latter disappointing finding can be ascribed to the peculiar acidic properties of the substituents at position 5 rather than to a retarding effect of the NO₂ group on the ring closure of the intermediate nitrile ylide,⁷ we decided to explore the FVP chemistry of 4-nitro-3-phenylisoxazole **1**.

Results and Discussion

Attempts to obtain the 4-nitrooxazole **5** by FVP of **1** under different conditions were completely unsuccessful. Isoxazole **1** was recovered unchanged at 425 °C (1 Torr), and its progressive decomposition was observed at 550–700 °C (10^{–2} Torr) without any appearance of the desired product. In contrast, prolonged heating of the same compound in boiling anisole (170 °C) afforded **5** in 35–40% yields.¹ Interestingly, this isomerization vanished for repeated experiments on more and more purified samples of **1**, that were substantially stable under these

conditions. Bearing in mind that the starting material was prepared by treatment of the corresponding 5-methoxycarbonyl derivative with concentrated HCl,⁸ it appeared reasonable to account for the original results by adventitious acid catalysis. Indeed, when **1** was heated in xylene at 155 °C with a trace amount of the same acid, 4-nitro-2-phenyloxazole **5** was isolated in 29% absolute yield.⁹

Nitrogen protonation probably favors the cleavage of both N–O and C–C bonds in the intermediates **2** and **3**, respectively, and the resulting nitrile ylide **4** is now able to convert into **5** despite the presence of the NO₂ group (Scheme 1).

The same electron-withdrawing substituent enabled the oxazole system to participate as a dienophile in normal [2 + 4] cycloaddition processes. Treatment of **5** with an excess of 2,3-dimethylbuta-1,3-diene (DMB) (**6**) in chloroform at 110 °C afforded predominantly the dihydrobenzoxazole **8** through the labile adduct **7**, together with a minor amount of compound **9** that could be easily obtained from **8** and 2,3-dichloro-5,6-dicyano-1,4-benzoquinone (DDQ) (Scheme 2).

The nitro derivative **5** was found to react even at 40 °C both with cyclopentadiene (**10**) and 6,6-dimethylfulvene (**13**), leading in good yields to mixtures of the diastereomeric tricyclic systems **11** and **12**, and **14** and **15**, respectively (Scheme 3). The former compounds were smoothly separated in chromatography, but efforts to isolate the more strained species **14** and **15** as pure products failed, due to their tendency to undergo retro Diels–Alder reactions.

Increasingly forcing conditions were required with cyclohexa-1,3-diene (**16**) and 2-pyrone (**19**), giving comparable amounts of **17** and **18** (overall yield 63%) and 2-phenylbenzoxazole (**21**) in 25% yield, respectively. The formation of the latter compound can be explained by a concomitant loss of carbon dioxide and nitrous acid from unstable primary adducts of type **20** (Scheme 4).¹⁰

In order to test the possibility of exploiting **5** for a new synthetic approach to oxazopyridines, this species was allowed to react with 1-(dimethylamino)-3-methyl-1-azabuta-1,3-diene (**22**). As a result of a [2 + 4] cycloaddition process followed by elimination of nitrous acid and dimethylamine from the labile intermediate **23**, 6-methyl-2-phenyloxazolo[4,5-*b*]pyridine (**24**) was obtained in 30% yield (Scheme 5).

A quite different reaction course was observed on going from **22** to the uracil **25**, previously employed as a 2-azadiene partner with electrophilic alkenes,¹¹ and we isolated the pyridopyrimidine system **28** in 67% yield. Ring-opening of the oxazoline moiety of the Michael adduct **26** now gives rise to the polyfunctionalized derivative **27** that leads to **28** by a 6 π -electron cyclization, followed by elimination of nitrous acid (Scheme 6).

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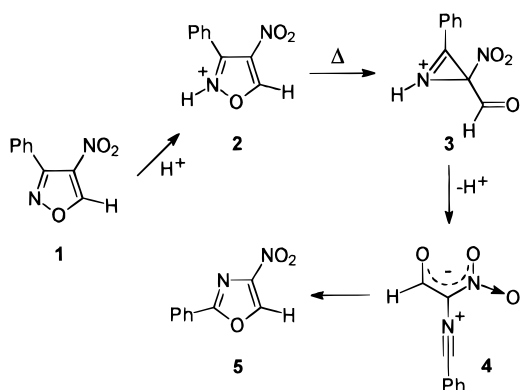
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(9) Attempts to improve this value at the expense of the recovered nitroisoxazole **1** (Experimental Section) by longer reaction times failed, due to increased decomposition processes.

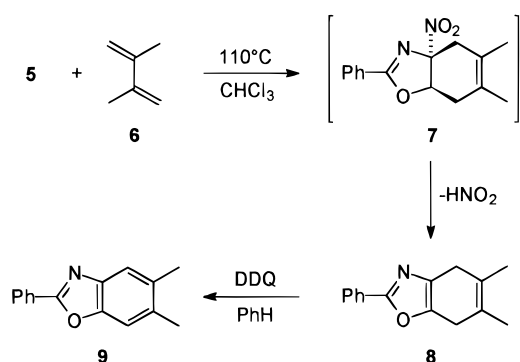
(10) The regiochemistry of these intermediates is arbitrarily portrayed.

(11) Walsh, E. B.; Nai-Jue, Z.; Fang, G.; Wamhoff, H. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1988**, *29*, 4401.

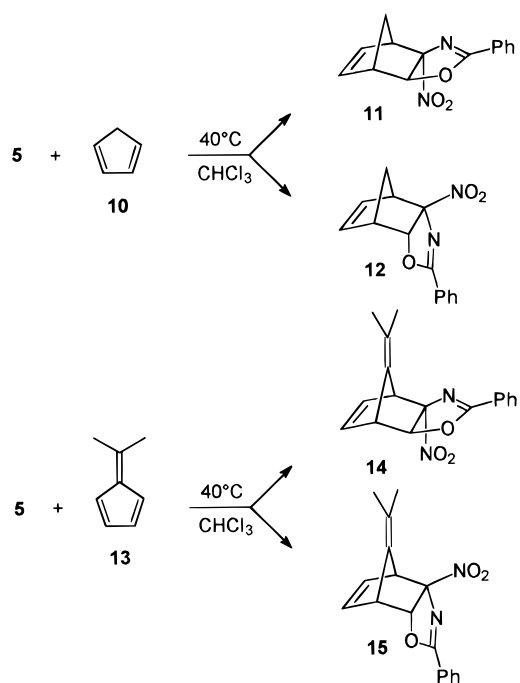
Scheme 1



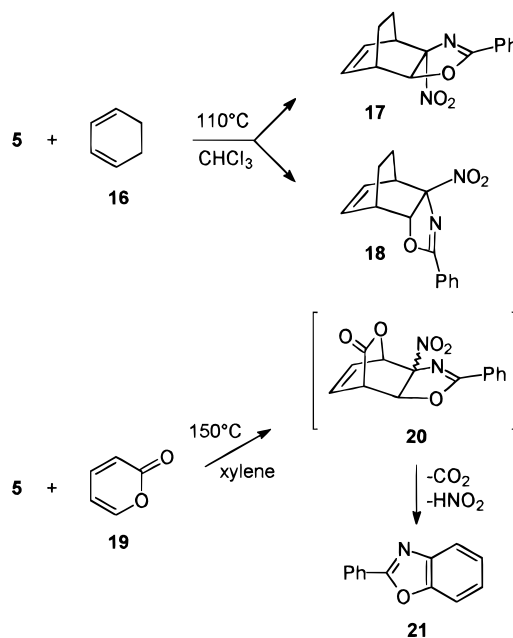
Scheme 2



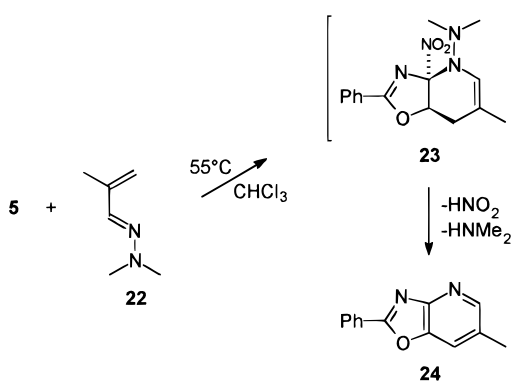
Scheme 3



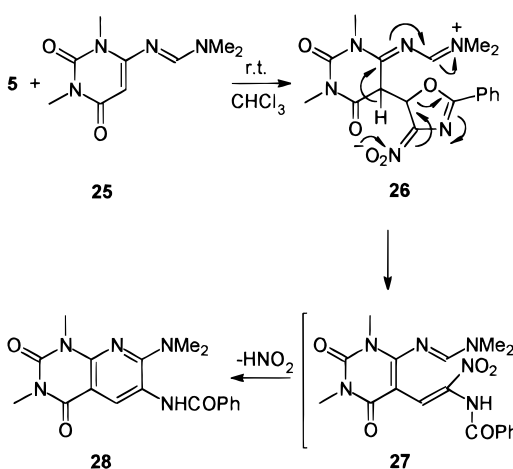
Scheme 4



Scheme 5



Scheme 6



Finally, treatment of 5 with diphenylnitrilimine (29) at room temperature afforded compound 31 in 49% yield through a regioselective 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition involving a primary adduct 30 that suffers from extrusion of nitrous acid (Scheme 7).

Whereas the regiochemistry of the bicyclic compound 24 was firmly established on the basis of the available ^{13}C NMR data for the different oxazolopyridine systems,¹² the structure of 31 was suggested by comparison of the ^{13}C NMR spectrum with that of the corresponding

unequivocal *N*-methyl derivative.¹³ The relative stereochemistry of the *endo* adducts 11, 14, and 17 and the *exo* isomers 12, 15, and 18 was inferred by a careful analysis of the shape of the H-2 resonance in the range δ 5.15–5.65 (Experimental Section). In particular, as a

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Anal. Calcd for $C_{15}H_{14}N_2O_3$: C, 66.66; H, 5.22; N, 10.36. Found: C, 66.75; H, 5.33, N, 10.35.

The following band yielded (*2RS,6RS*)-6-nitro-4-phenyl-3-oxa-5-azatricyclo[5.2.2.0^{2,6}]undeca-4,8-diene (**18**) ($R_f = 0.15$, 0.089 g, 33%) that was crystallized from *n*-pentane as colorless crystals: mp 114–115 °C; IR 3090, 3070, 3052, 1631, 1578, 1547, and 1351 cm^{-1} ; 1H NMR δ 1.23–1.79 (m, 4H), 3.18–3.27 (m, 1H), 3.60–3.69 (m, 1H), 5.58 (d, $J = 3.7$ Hz, 1H), 6.11–6.26 (m, 2H), 7.35–7.57 (m, 3H), 7.89–7.98 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR δ 19.2 (t), 19.35 (t), 33.7 (d), 37.7 (d), 83.3 (d), 117.3 (s), 125.7 (s), 128.4 (d), 128.9 (d), 130.6 (d), 131.8 (d), 132.7 (d), 169.2 (s). Anal. Calcd for $C_{15}H_{14}N_2O_3$: C, 66.66; H, 5.22; N, 10.36. Found: C, 66.38; H, 5.20; N, 10.34.

Conversion of the Dihydro Derivative 8 into 9. A mixture of **8** (0.060 g, 0.27 mmol) and DDQ (0.067 g, 0.3 mmol) in anhydrous benzene (1 mL) was refluxed with stirring for 1 h. Chromatographic workup [petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (6:1 v/v)] of the brown solid left by evaporation to dryness gave **9** ($R_f = 0.6$, 0.057 g, 95%).

Reaction of 5 with 6,6-Dimethylfulvene (13). The raw product coming from the reaction of **5** with **13** (0.53 g, 0.60 mL, 5 mmol) in $CHCl_3$ at 40 °C for 7 days was subjected to flash chromatography [petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (10:1 v/v)] to give a 12:1 mixture of (*2SR,6SR*)- and (*2RS,6RS*)-10-isopropylidene-6-nitro-4-phenyl-3-oxa-5-azatricyclo[5.2.1.0^{2,6}]deca-4,8-diene (**14** and **15**) as a white solid ($R_f = 0.44$, 0.156 g, 53%): 1H NMR δ 1.49 (s, 3H), 1.51 (s, 3H), [1.63 (s, 3H)], [1.64 (s, 3H)], 3.82–3.87 (m, 1H), [3.88–3.92 (m, 1H)], 4.01–4.06 (m, 1H), [4.34–4.37 (m, 1H)], 5.22 (d, $J = 1.0$ Hz, 1H), [5.52 (d, $J = 4.5$ Hz, 1H)], [6.24–6.27 (m, 2H)], 6.29–6.40 (m, 2H), 7.35–7.58 (m, 3H), 7.88–7.94 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR δ 19.5 (q), [19.7 (q)], 20.0 (q), [29.6 (q)], [46.6 (d)], 49.35 (d), [50.9 (d)], 51.5 (d), [86.5 (d)], 86.7 (d), 119.8 (s), 120.3 (s), 126.1 (s), 128.5 (d), 128.7 (d), 132.6 (d), 135.0 (d), 136.25 (d), 160.7 (s), 169.55 (s).¹⁴

Some unreacted **5** was recovered from the slower running fractions ($R_f = 0.30$, 0.030 g).

Cycloaddition of 5 with 2-Pyrene (19). Compound **5** was heated with **19** (0.49 g, 0.4 mL, 5 mmol) in xylene at 150 °C for 48 h; the brown residue was purified by flash chromatography [petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (10:1 v/v)] to give 2-phenylbenzoxazole (**21**) as a white solid ($R_f = 0.53$, 0.040 g, 21%): mp 101–102 °C [after sublimation at 50 °C (10⁻² Torr)] (lit.¹⁵ mp 102 °C).

6-Methyl-2-phenyloxazolo[4,5-*b*]pyridine (24). A mixture of **5** and **22**¹⁶ (0.34 g, 3 mmol) in $CHCl_3$ was heated at 55 °C for

48 h; chromatographic workup [petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (3:1 v/v)] of the residue afforded compound **24** ($R_f = 0.22$, 0.060 g, 29%) that was crystallized from ether as colorless flakes: mp 157–158 °C; IR 3059, 3035, 1611, and 1546 cm^{-1} ; 1H NMR δ 2.51 (t, $J = 0.7$ Hz, 3H), 7.51–7.58 (m, 3H), 7.68 (m, 1H), 8.28–8.33 (m, 2H), 8.42 (m, 1H); ^{13}C NMR δ 18.8 (q), 118.4 (d), 126.6 (s), 127.9 (d), 128.9 (d), 130.4 (s), 132.1 (d), 143.1 (s), 147.3 (d), 154.3 (s), 164.95 (s). Anal. Calcd for $C_{13}H_{10}N_2O$: C, 74.27; H, 4.79; N, 13.32. Found: C, 73.98; H, 4.74; N, 13.32.

6-(Benzoylamino)-1,3-dimethyl-7-(dimethylamino)pyrido[2,3-*d*]pyrimidine-2,4(1*H*,3*H*)-dione (28). A mixture of **5** and the uracil **25**¹⁷ (0.63 g, 3 mmol) in $CHCl_3$ was stirred at room temperature for 96 h; the raw product was subjected to flash chromatography with ethyl acetate/petroleum ether (3:1 v/v) as eluent to give compound **28** ($R_f = 0.5$, 0.236 g, 67%) that was crystallized from $CHCl_3$ as white needles: mp 224–225 °C; IR 3487, 3420, 3212, 1694, 1650, and 1639 cm^{-1} ; 1H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆) δ 3.14 (s, 6H), 3.25 (s, 3H), 3.50 (s, 3H), 7.48–7.62 (m, 3H), 7.83 (s, 1H), 7.96–8.05 (m, 2H), 10.11 (br s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆) δ 28.0 (q), 29.1 (q), 40.1 (q), 99.6 (s), 115.4 (s), 127.9 (d), 128.8 (d), 132.0 (d), 133.9 (s), 137.6 (d), 148.3 (s), 151.6 (s), 158.3 (s), 160.3 (s), 166.1 (s). Anal. Calcd for $C_{18}H_{19}N_5O_3$: C, 61.18; H, 5.42; N, 19.82. Found: C, 60.97; H, 5.73; N, 19.76.

1,3,5-Triphenyl-1*H*-pyrazolo[3,4-*d*]oxazole (31). Triethylamine (0.304 g, 0.42 mL, 3 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of **5** and *N*-phenylbenzoylhydrazonoyl chloride¹⁸ (0.69 g, 3 mmol) in anhydrous benzene (4 mL), and the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 24 h. After removal of the solid by filtration, the organic solution was evaporated to dryness; chromatographic workup of the residue with ligroin/toluene (5:4 v/v) as eluent afforded the tricyclic derivative **31** ($R_f = 0.40$, 0.165 g, 49%) that was crystallized from acetone as white needles: mp 234 °C; IR 3060, 3040, 1599, 1570, and 1538 cm^{-1} ; 1H NMR δ 7.20–7.57 (m, 9H), 8.08–8.32 (m, 6H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz) δ 117.7 (d), 125.55 (d), 126.2 (d), 127.2 (d), 127.65 (s), 128.5 (d), 128.8 (d), 128.9 (d), 129.3 (d), 130.6 (s), 131.5 (d), 132.05 (s), 139.1 (s), 139.5 (s), 150.1 (s), 167.8 (s). Anal. Calcd for $C_{22}H_{15}N_3O$: C, 78.32; H, 4.48; N, 12.45. Found: C, 78.26; H, 4.53; N, 12.67.

Acknowledgment. We wish to thank Mrs. Brunella Innocenti for the analytical data. Prof. Stefano Chimi-chi is gratefully acknowledged for running and discussing the ^{13}C NMR spectra of compound **31**.

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