

Iridium-Catalyzed C–H Amination with Anilines at Room Temperature: Compatibility of Iridacycles with External Oxidants

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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Described herein is the development of an iridium-catalyzed direct C–H amination of benzamides with anilines at room temperature, representing a unique example of an Ir catalyst system that is compatible with external oxidants. Mechanistic details, such as the isolation and characterization of key iridacycle intermediates, are also discussed.

vclometalated iridium(III) half-sandwich complexes have received intensive research interest because of their catalytic activity toward various chemical transformations.¹ In particular, these isolable Ir complexes are known to mediate a range of C-H functionalizations in a stoichiometric manner.² However, Cp*Ir(III) metallacycles have been observed to be catalytically inactive under oxidative conditions, mainly due to structural robustness and incompatibility with external oxidants. Notable advances, however, have been made in the ligandassisted Ir-catalyzed C-H borylation,³ in which the desired oxidative C-H functionalization is facilitated by utilizing B-B or B-H bonds as an internal oxidant.^{3,4} In addition, we developed an Ir-catalyzed direct C-H amidation by employing organic azides as a nitrogen source as well as an internal oxidant via N-N₂ bond cleavage.⁵ Despite this progress, it remains to be determined whether cyclometalated Ir(III) complexes are compatible with external oxidants, thus eventually enabling a catalytic cycle in oxidative C-H functionalization (Scheme 1A).

As a straightforward and economical approach, catalytic transformation of unreactive C–H bonds to C–heteroatom bonds has been extensively investigated.^{1a,6} In particular, inspired by great advances in the Cu- and Pd-catalyzed cross-coupling of (hetero)aryl halides with amines leading to C–N bond formation,⁷ metal-mediated direct C–H amination received intensive research focus in recent years.⁸ While important issues remain to be addressed in this area in terms of substrate scope, reaction conditions, and functional group tolerance, most previous intermolecular C–H aminations employ either (sulfon)amide-based coupling partners^{9a,b} or preactivated amine precursors.^{5,9c–n}

In this regard, there remains a major challenge: direct utilization of non-preactivated amines as a reactant.¹⁰ In particular, the use of anilines as a nitrogen source without preactivation is highly desirable considering the fact that a wide range of anilines are accessible, and the resulting arylamine products are useful in organic synthesis, medicinal chemistry, and materials science.¹¹ However, the direct use of anilines usually



A) Previous Synthetic Approaches with Cyclometalated Ir(III)



results in significantly decreased activity of employed catalyst systems, mainly because of the highly nucleophilic nature of anilines.¹² As a result, the development of mild catalytic C–H amination procedures allowing the use of anilines is an important research goal. These considerations led us to investigate Ircatalyzed C–H amination of arenes with anilines, giving rise to the development of *a room-temperature amination of benzamides with anilines* (Scheme 1B).

After a number of trials (see the Supporting Information (SI) for details), we were able to synthesize an iridacyclic species (2) by treating benzamide 1a with $[IrCp*Cl_2]_2$ in the presence of AgOTFA and Li_2CO_3 (Scheme 2A). The structure of the iridacycle 2 was unambiguously characterized by X-ray crystallographic analysis. It shows a three-legged piano stool geometry,





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with two slightly longer Ir–C bonds (2.24 and 2.23 Å) to the Cp* ring than the remaining three (2.12, 2.14, and 2.14 Å). The distance between the Ir and the carbonyl O atom is 2.12 Å, the same as that between Ir and the trifluoroacetato O atom. It revealed that *the Ir metal is coordinated to the carbonyl O atom rather than the amide nitrogen atom*, in contrast to the previously reported palladacycle complexes in which the metal bonds to an amide nitrogen atom.¹³ It should be empathized that, to the best of our knowledge, this species **2** represents *the first example of a crystal structure of an iridacycle generated from a benzamide*. We were pleased to see that the new iridacycle **2** underwent amination upon treatment with (4-trifluoromethyl)aniline (**3a**) at 25°C in the presence of a Ag(I) species and copper acetate to afford **4a** in 65% yield after protonolysis (Scheme 2B).

Encouraged by the above results of the *stoichiometric* amination, we were strongly driven to search for optimal conditions that would allow the reaction to be *catalytic* (Table 1). *N*-Adamantylbenzamide (1a) was chosen as a model substrate since we initially envisaged that the steric bulky of the *N*-alkyl group could help the facile formation of an iridacyclic intermediate.¹⁴

Table 1. Optimization of Reaction Parameters^a

	NHAd + H ₂ N	cataly oxida additiv	nt AdHN O	H.	4	
	~ _н	CF ₃ CICH ₂ CI temp. 2	H ₂ Cl	Ļ		
1a		3a	·····p, _ · · ·		5a	
entry	catalyst (mol %)	additive	oxidant	temp	yield	
		(equiv)	(equiv)	(°C)	$(\%)^{b}$	
1	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	$Cu(OAc)_2(0.5)$	$AgNTf_{2}(3.0)$	80	70	
2	$[\mathrm{IrCp}^{*}\mathrm{Cl}_{2}]_{2}(5)$	$Cu(OAc)_2(0.5)$	_	80	n.r.	
3	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	_	_	80	n.r.	
4	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	$Cu(OAc)_2(0.5)$	$AgNTf_{2}(3.0)$	25	71	
5	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	_	$AgNTf_{2}(3.0)$	25	20	
6	_	$Cu(OAc)_2(0.5)$	$AgNTf_{2}(3.0)$	25	n.r.	
7	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	NH₄OAc (1.0)	$AgNTf_{2}(3.0)$	25	60	
8	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	$Na_{2}CO_{3}(1.0)$	$AgNTf_{2}(3.0)$	25	15	
9	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	$Cu(OAc)_2(0.5)$	NFSI ^c (2.0)	25	n.r.	
10	$[IrCp^{*}Cl_{2}]_{2}(5)$	$Cu(OAc)_2(0.5)$	$Na_{2}S_{2}O_{8}\left(4.0\right)$	25	n.r.	
11	$IrCp^{*}(OAc)_{2}(10)$	$Cu(OAc)_2(0.5)$	$AgNTf_{2}(3.0)$	25	91 (85)	
12	$Pd(OTf)_2(5)$	_	$Na_{2}S_{2}O_{8}(4.0)$	80	n.r.	
13^d	$Cu(OAc)_2(100)$	$Na_2CO_3(1.0)$	air (1 atm)	80	n.r.	

^{*a*}**1a** (0.2 mmol), **3a** (0.21 mmol), catalyst, oxidant, and additive in 1,2dichloroethane (DCE, 0.66 mL) for 24h. ^{*b*}Yield based on ¹H NMR analysis of the crude reaction mixture using CH_2Br_2 as the internal oxidant (isolated yield in parentheses). n.r. = no reaction. ^{*c*}N-Fluorobenzenesulfonimide. ^{*d*}DMSO (2.0 mL) solvent.

We were delighted to observe that a catalytic reaction indeed did proceed in the presence of $Cu(OAc)_2$ and $AgNTf_2$ coadditives (entry 1). However, the amination did not occur in the absence of Ag additives (entries 2, 3). Surprisingly, this catalytic amination was found to be high-yielding even at room temperature (entry 4). The efficiency was decreased significantly in the absence of $Cu(OAc)_2$ (entry 5). The Ir catalyst was essential for the amination (entry 6). The type of acetate additives turned out to be important, and among various acetates screened (e.g., entries 7 and 8; see SI for full data), $Cu(OAc)_2$ (0.5 equiv to 1a) was most effective. Likewise, the choice of oxidants was another key to success. For instance, when frequently employed oxidants such as NFSI or $Na_2S_2O_8$ were





^a1a (0.2 mmol) and 3 (0.21 mmol) in DCE (0.66 mL) at 25°C for 24h (isolated yields). ^bConducted at 80°C, 3h. ^cFor 48h.

examined, 9a,k,15 the amination did not proceed at all (entries 9 and 10). When a separately prepared iridium acetate complex, [IrCp*(OAc)₂], 16 was used as a catalyst, the desired product was obtained in excellent yield (entry 11). It was noteworthy that Pd(OTf)₂ or Cu(OAc)₂ (1.0 equiv) metal systems, which were previously employed in the C–H amidation/amination reactions, 10f,15 were ineffective for the present amination with aniline 3a (entries 12, 13).

With the optimized conditions for the Ir-catalyzed direct C-H amination in hand, we next investigated the scope of the current procedure by testing various aniline derivatives in the reaction with N-adamantylbenzamide 1a (Table 2). Anilines bearing electron-withdrawing substituents, such as trifluoromethyl (3a), trifluoromethylthio (3b), sulfonyl (3c-e), and triflic (3f) groups, smoothly participated in the amination in moderate to high yields. Anilines having a meta-substituent (3g,h) afforded the desired products in moderate yields. In addition, we found that a series of disubstituted anilines also reacted to furnish the corresponding amination products (5i-n). Interestingly, anilines possessing both electron-donating and -withdrawing groups underwent the amination with high efficiency (5i-k). Anilines bearing mono- or dihalogens showed reasonable reactivity (51n). Functional group tolerance was excellent in the current amination procedure as demonstrated by the successful reactions with anilines bearing sensitive groups such as thioether, sulfonyl, triflate, and halides. Meanwhile, reactivity of aniline or its derivatives bearing electron-donating substituents was observed to be low, and no desired products were obtained under present conditions. In addition, N-substituted anilines were not reacted even at higher temperature (100°C), providing a clue about the reaction mechanism (vide infra).

The present amination method was successfully applied to a wide range of benzamides with **3a** as the coupling partner (Table



^a1 (0.2 mmol) and 2a (0.21 mmol) in DCE (0.66 mL) at 25°C for 24h (isolated yields). ^bAt 80°C in α, α, α -trifluorotoluene (0.66 mL) for 3h.

3). It was revealed that the reaction efficiency was maintained irrespective of the electronic properties of the substrate (**6a–e**). As anticipated, the amination took place at the sterically more accessible C–H bonds (**6f**,**g**). Again, functional group tolerance was excellent, as seen in the successful amination of benzamides having free or acetate-masked hydroxyl groups (**6h**,**i**). Moreover, the reaction was not greatly affected by varying the *N*-alkyl group on the benzamide substrate (**6j–m**).¹⁷ In fact, not only benzamides bearing simple *N*-alkyl moieties (**6j**,**k**), but also derivatives bearing a stereogenic center were readily aminated with retention of stereochemical purity (**6l**,**m**). *N*-Alkyl-substituted amide products obtained in this study can readily be converted to the corresponding *N*-arylanthranilic acids or 2-(arylamino)benzamides according to the reported procedures.^{9m}

To investigate the mechanistic details of the present Ircatalyzed C–H amination reaction, a series of stoichiometric reactions using isolated iridacycles was initially planned. When an iridacycle species 2 was treated with aniline 3a, the desired amination did not occur in the absence of Ag(I) oxidant. Instead, an aniline-coordinated iridacycle complex (7) was obtained quantitatively (Scheme 3A). The structure of 7 was unambiguously characterized by NMR and X-ray analyses. The bond length between the Ir metal center and nitrogen atom of aniline in 7 was 2.16 Å, in the range of several aniline complexes previously known.^{12,18}

Stoichiometric reactions of 7 provided interesting results: whereas treatment of 7 with $Cu(OAc)_2$ alone failed to induce any conversion; the desired aminated product (4a) was obtained by adding Ag oxidant in the presence of $Cu(OAc)_2$ (Scheme 3B). Other oxidants were also examined for this reaction, revealing

Scheme 3. Mechanistic Studies



that only Ag(I) salt was effective.¹⁹ Although more comprehensive studies are required to elucidate details of an aminotransfer pathway, this result suggests that the amination may proceed via formation of a high-valent Ir(V) nitrenoid species (8), potentially consistent with enhanced reactivity with electron-poor anilines. It is proposed that 8 will subsequently undergo a nitrenoid insertion and then proto-demetalation to deliver an aminated product with concurrent regeneration of Cp*Ir(III) species. An alternative pathway involving an Ir(III)/ Ir(I) cycle, in which Ir(III) amido species (9) undergoes reductive elimination and the resulting Ir(I) is reoxidized, is reasoned to be less likely (Scheme 3C).

Based on the above mechanistic studies and relevant literature, $^{1a-c,2e,20}$ we depict a plausible catalytic cycle in Scheme 4. First, an Ir species induces an irreversible C–H cleavage of

Scheme 4. Proposed Mechanistic Pathway



benzamides to generate a cyclometalated Ir(III) complex II, believed to be a rate-limiting step on the basis of kinetic isotope effect studies (see SI for details). A ligand exchange of acetate with aniline delivers an isolable cationic aniline complex III. Oxidation of a metallacycle III is proposed to occur forming an Ir(V)-nitrenoid species IV that then undergoes an anilino-group transfer leading to an Ir complex V. Finally, proto-demetalation

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from \mathbf{V} will occur to deliver desired *N*,*N*-diarylamine products with regeneration of the catalyst.

In conclusion, we report an Ir-catalyzed direct C–H amination of benzamides using simple aniline coupling partners without preactivations. This advance is a significant example of an iridium catalyst system being compatible with external oxidants to allow an anilino-group transfer even at room temperature for the first time. A catalytic cycle involving high-valent Ir species is proposed, and further methodologies of C–H functionalization are anticipated to be developed based on this mechanistic understanding.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

S Supporting Information

Experimental details and characterization data. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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