

Decarbonylative Diaryl Ether Synthesis by Pd and Ni Catalysis

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S Supporting Information

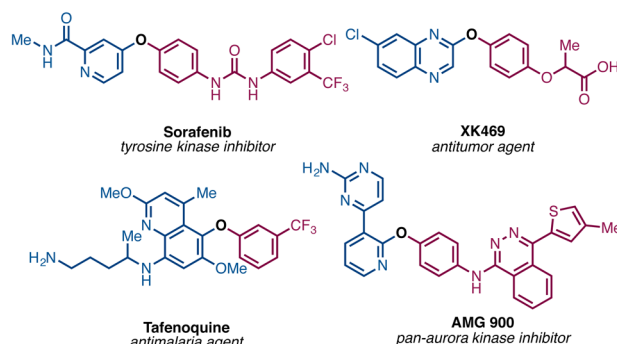
ABSTRACT: Because diaryl ethers are present as an important motif in pharmaceuticals and natural products, extensive studies for the development of novel methods have been conducted. A conventional method for the construction of the diaryl ether moiety is the intermolecular cross-coupling reaction of aryl halides and phenols with a copper or palladium catalyst. We developed a catalytic decarbonylative etherification of aromatic esters using a palladium or nickel catalyst with our enabling diphosphine ligand to give the corresponding diaryl ethers. The present reaction can be conducted on gram scale in excellent yield. This reaction not only functions in an intramolecular setting but also allows for a cross-etherification using other phenols.

The diaryl ether scaffold has often been seen in pharmaceuticals and natural products, and particularly, arenoxazine frameworks are observed in pharmaceutically relevant compounds such as Sorafenib, XK469, Tafenoquine, and AMG900 (Scheme 1A).^{1,2} Therefore, the development of methods for diaryl ether synthesis is in high demand. Classically, the copper-mediated Ullmann ether synthesis is known to be one of the most reliable methods for the synthesis of diaryl ethers.³ However, over the past few decades, palladium- and copper-catalyzed cross-coupling of aryl halides with phenols has been developed extensively and is now considered to be a “conventional” route (Scheme 1B).^{4,5} Additionally, copper-mediated or catalyzed Chan–Lam–Evans-type Ar–B/Ar–OH couplings are well-established methods for diaryl ether synthesis.⁶

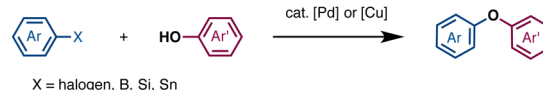
In related work, our group and others have recently developed a range of decarbonylative coupling reactions using nickel or palladium catalysts (Scheme 1C).^{7,8} These reactions proceed through ester C–O bond activation by a metal catalyst (intermediate A), after which nucleophiles attack the metal center and decarbonylation produces intermediate B. Finally, reductive elimination from B can form coupling products. However, in an alternative pathway from intermediate A, if decarbonylation occurred without an external nucleophile, diaryl ethers could be obtained by reductive elimination through intermediate C. Capitalizing on this blueprint, we herein report a de novo synthesis of diaryl ethers by decarbonylation from aromatic esters.

Scheme 1. (A) Diaryl Ethers in Pharmaceutically Relevant Compounds; (B) Conventional Diaryl Ether Synthesis by Transition-Metal Catalysis; (C) Decarbonylative Coupling Reaction and Diaryl Ether Synthesis by Ni or Pd Catalysis

A. Diaryl ethers (arenoxazines) in pharmaceutically relevant compounds

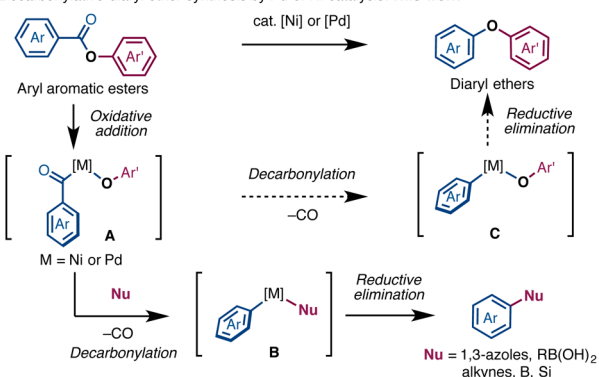


B. Conventional diaryl ether synthesis by transition-metal catalysis



X = halogen, B, Si, Sn

C. Decarbonylative diaryl ether synthesis by Pd or Ni catalysis: *This work*



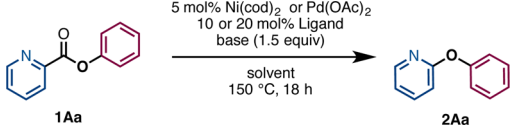
First, we attempted to react many aromatic esters under our catalytic nickel protocol⁷ without additional nucleophiles. After extensive screening, we found that phenyl picolinate (**1Aa**) was converted to 2-phenoxy-pyridine (**2Aa**) under Ni(cod)₂ (5 mol %), dcype [1,2-bis(dicyclohexyl)phosphino]ethane, 10 mol %], and K₃PO₄ (1.5 equiv) in toluene at 150 °C for 18 h in 37%

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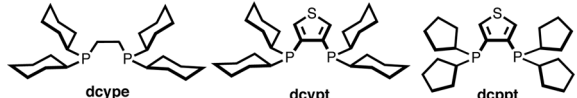
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isolated yield (Table 1, entry 1).⁹ When we changed the ligand to other diphosphine ligands such as dppf (entry 2) and BINAP

Table 1. Screening of the Reaction Conditions^a



entry	metal	ligand	base	solvent	2Aa (%) ^b
1	Ni	dcype	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	37
2	Ni	dppf	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
3	Ni	BINAP	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
4	Ni	PPh ₃	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
5	Ni	PCy ₃	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
6	Ni	P(<i>n</i> -Bu) ₃	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
7	Ni	bipy	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
8	Ni	IPr	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
9	Ni	ICy	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	0
10	Ni	dcypt	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	90
11	Ni	dcypt	K ₃ PO ₄	dioxane	79
12	Ni	dcypt	K ₃ PO ₄	THF	67
13	Ni	dcypt	K ₃ PO ₄	DMF	20
14	Ni	dcypt	CsF	toluene	90
15	Ni	dcypt	Na ₂ CO ₃	toluene	82
16	Ni	dcypt	—	toluene	74
17	Pd	dcypt	CsF	toluene	62
18	Pd	dcppt	K ₃ PO ₄	toluene	82 ^c



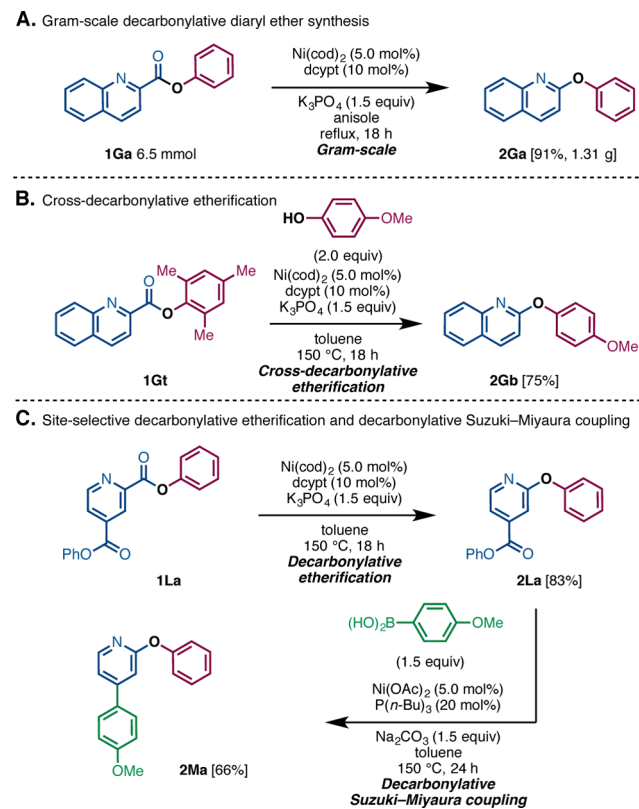
^aUnless otherwise noted, the reactions conditions were as follows: **1Aa** (0.40 mmol), Ni(cod)₂ (5 mol %) or Pd(OAc)₂ (10 mol %), ligand (bidentate, 10 mol %; monodentate, 20 mol %), base (1.5 equiv), solvent (1.6 mL), 150 °C for 18 h. ^bIsolated yield. ^c140 °C for 12 h.

(entry 3), the reaction completely shut down, and only starting material was recovered. Monophosphines PPh₃ (entry 4), PCy₃ (entry 5), and P(*n*-Bu)₃ (entry 6) as well as bipy (entry 7) also led to no reaction. Although NHC ligands, e.g., IPr and ICy were reported to be effective for the C–heteroatom bond activation,^{8h,9} they did not work at all in this reaction (entries 8 and 9). Finally, dcypt [3,4-bis(dicyclohexylphosphino)thiophene], which was developed by our group,¹⁰ was found to increase dramatically the yield, affording **2Aa** in 90% yield (entry 10).

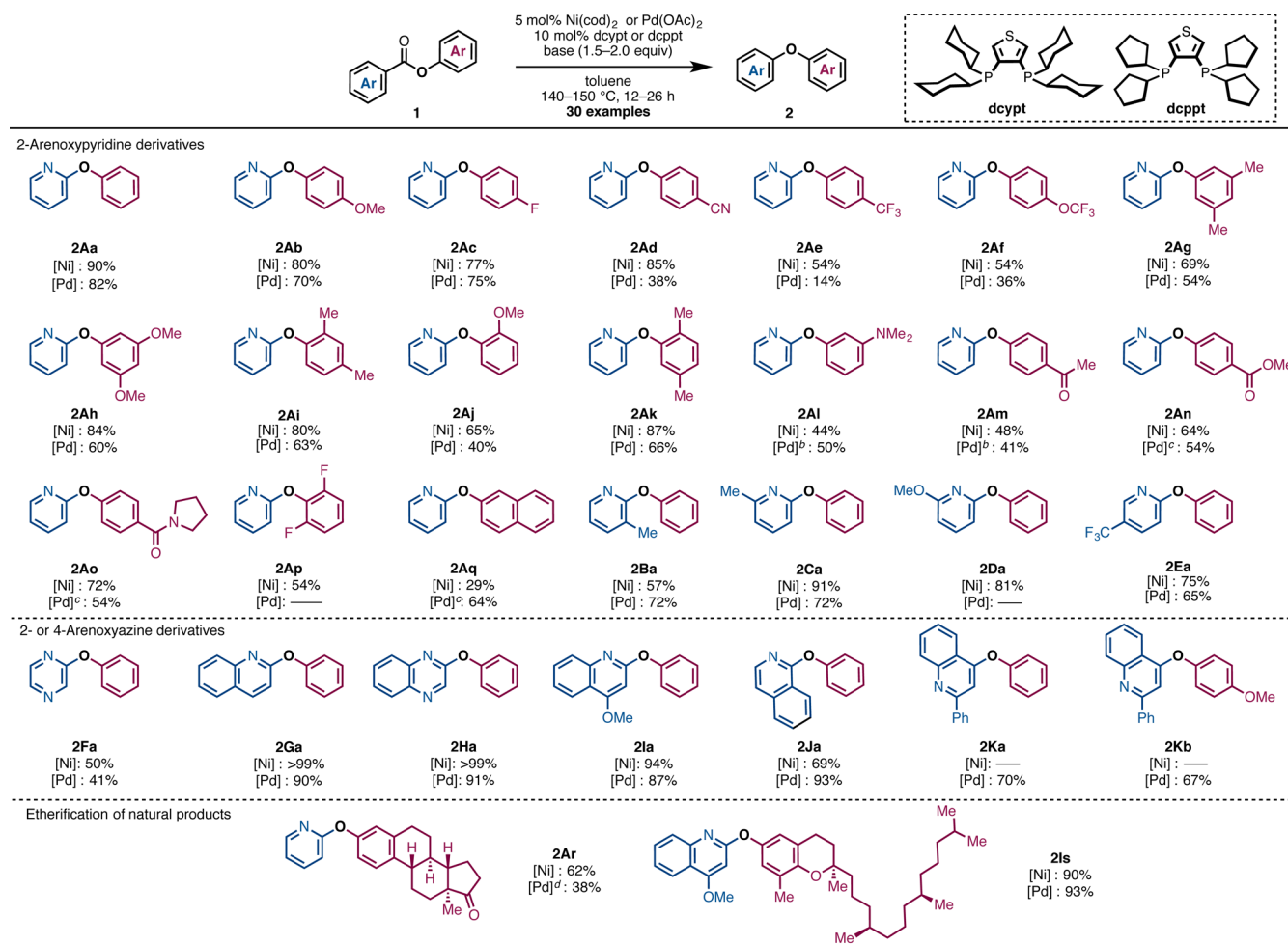
Regarding the solvent, it can be changed to 1,4-dioxane, THF, and DMF, albeit in decreased yields (entries 11–13). When the base was changed CsF (entry 14) and Na₂CO₃ (entry 15), the yield was the same or slightly decreased, and even without base, the desired product **2Aa** can be obtained in 74% yield (entry 16). When the metal catalyst was changed from nickel to palladium [Pd(OAc)₂] (same conditions as entry 13), **2Aa** was obtained in 62% yield (entry 17), but after optimizing the reaction conditions further, dcppt [3,4-bis(dicyclopentylphosphino)thiophene] as the ligand and K₃PO₄ as the base led to **2Aa** in 82% yield (entry 18).¹¹

Under the established conditions, the substrate scope for this nickel- or palladium-catalyzed decarbonylative diaryl ether synthesis was examined (Table 2). The phenyl group on the picolinate was changed to 4-methoxyphenyl, 4-fluorophenyl, 4-

Scheme 2. (A) Gram-Scale Decarbonylative Diaryl Ether Synthesis; (B) Cross-Decarbonylative Etherification; (C) Site-Selective Decarbonylative Etherification and Decarbonylative Suzuki–Miyaura Coupling



cyanophenyl, 4-trifluoromethylphenyl, and 4-trifluoromethoxyphenyl to give 2-arenoxy-pyridines (**2Ab–2Af**) in good to moderate yields. Disubstituted aryl groups on the picolinate such as 3,5-dimethylphenyl and 3,5-dimethoxyphenyl worked well to afford arenoxy-pyridines **2Ag** (69% by Ni) and **2Af** (80% by Ni). Even if the aryl group has a substituent on the *ortho* position, decarbonylative etherification proceeded to furnish the corresponding products **2Ai–2Ak**. Reactive functional groups on the aryl moiety such as amines, ketones, methyl esters, and amides were tolerated to give diaryl ethers **2Am–2Ao** in good yields. For these substrates, dcypt instead of dcppt, and different bases (CsF or KF) for palladium catalysis gave better yields. Additionally, electron-deficient aryl groups such as 2,6-difluorophenyl, as well as a naphthalenyl group still reacted to form **2Ap** (54% by Ni) and **2Aq** (64% by Pd), respectively. Substituents on the pyridine portion of the starting material such as 3-methyl, 6-methyl, 6-methoxy, and 5-trifluoromethyl gave the corresponding diaryl ethers **2Ba**, **2Ca**, **2Da**, and **2Ea** in good to excellent yields. Next, we screened other phenyl azinecarboxylates. Although phenyl pyrazinecarboxylate gave **2Fa** in moderate yield, quinoline, quinoxaline, and their derivatives afforded the corresponding 2-phenoxyazines **2Ga**, **2Ha**, **2Ia**, and **2Ja** in nearly quantitative yields. Unfortunately, this reaction only proceeds generally on aryl 2-azinecarboxylates, but specific aryl 4-azinecarboxylates did react under palladium catalysis to give **2Ka** and **2Kb** in good yields. Furthermore, azinecarboxylates derived from natural products such as estrone and tocopherol can be etherified under the standard conditions to form diaryl ethers **2Ar** (62% by Ni) and **2Is** (93% by Pd), respectively. Although palladium catalysis

Table 2. Decarbonylative Diaryl Ether Synthesis^a

^aUnless otherwise noted, reactions conditions were as follows: [Ni]: **1** (0.40 mmol), Ni(cod)₂ (5 mol %), dcypt (10 mol %), K₃PO₄ (1.5 equiv), toluene (1.6 mL), 150 °C, 18 h. [Pd]: **1** (0.40 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (5 mol %), dcppt (10 mol %), K₃PO₄ (1.5 equiv), toluene (1.6 mL), 150 °C, 18 h. ^bdcppt (5 mol %) was used instead of dcypt. CsF (2.0 equiv) was used instead of K₃PO₄ (1.5 equiv). ^cdcppt (5 mol %) was used instead of dcypt. KF (2.0 equiv) was used instead of K₃PO₄ (1.5 equiv). MS 3 Å was used as an additive. ^d170 °C.

generally gave slightly lower yields compared to nickel catalysis, both modes of catalysis gave the desired product, otherwise the starting material was recovered. Although it remains unclear why 2-azinecarboxylates discretely work well in this reaction, a plausible reason can be elaborated as follows: (i) typically, reductive elimination from Ar–M–OAr' intermediate **C** is the rate-determining step for the formation of Ar–OAr'; and (ii) it is known that the reductive elimination is faster using 2-azine–M–OR than for 3-azine and 4-azine,¹² possibly accelerated by the electron-withdrawing nature of a 2-azinyl group bestowing a greater positive charge and destabilizing the metal center.

Next, we conducted experiments to showcase the utility of this reaction in a variety of settings (Scheme 2). This decarbonylative etherification can be applied on gram-scale (Scheme 2A). For example, **1Ga** (6.5 mmol) was subjected to this reaction under Ni catalysis using anisole as solvent to afford the desired product **2Ga** in 91% yield (1.31 g of product).

Additionally, when an azinecarboxylate with bulky aryl substituents such as **1Gt** was used, cross-etherification was made possible with 4-methoxyphenol to furnish **2Gb** in 75% yield (Scheme 2B). Finally, site-selective decarbonylative etherification was achieved (Scheme 2C): a diphenyl azinedicarboxylate was treated under nickel catalysis to afford

aryl ether **2La** in 83% yield with exclusive C2-selectivity. Subsequently, **2La** was reacted with 4-methoxyphenyl boronic acid using a Ni(OAc)₂/P(*n*-Bu)₃ catalyst and Na₂CO₃ in toluene to give coupling product **2Ma** in 66% yield by a de(phenoxy)carbonylative Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling.^{7b}

In conclusion, we have developed the first decarbonylative ether synthesis by nickel or palladium catalysis. Use of our in-house ligands, dcypt and dcppt, were critical for this reaction, in which a variety of aryl azinecarboxylates lead to the corresponding 2-arenoxazines by decarbonylation. Further optimization of reaction conditions to achieve a broader scope is ongoing in our laboratory.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/jacs.7b00049.

Detailed experimental procedures, and spectral data for all compounds, including scanned images of ¹H, ¹³C NMR spectra (DOCX)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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(11) See [Supporting Information](#) for further experimental details.

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