# Synthesis of Acyclic α,β-Unsaturated Ketones via Pd(II)-Catalyzed Intermolecular Reaction of Alkynamides and Alkenes

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Transition-metal-catalyzed reactions of alkynes with alkenes have proven to be reliable and important strategies for carbon–carbon bond formation.[1] Previous efforts have focused primarily on non-oxidative reactions such as isomerizations of enynes to synthesize cyclic dienes and cyclopropyl derivatives,[1a–g] or cross-metathesis to synthesize acyclic dienes.[1e,h] Extending alkyne–alkene reactivity to include oxidative couplings[2] could provide convenient access to additional organic functionality. We recently used DNA-templated synthesis and in vitro selection to discover a Pd(II)-mediated alkyne–alkene cyclization reaction that generates a macrocyclic α,β-unsaturated ketone.[3] Here we describe the development of an analogous intermolecular oxidative coupling reaction between alkynamides and terminal alkenes to generate acyclic α,β-unsaturated ketones[4] (eq 1). Our results reveal that amides can mediate this mode of alkyne reactivity and provide efficient access to acyclic α,β-unsaturated ketones under very mild conditions.

$$(1)$$
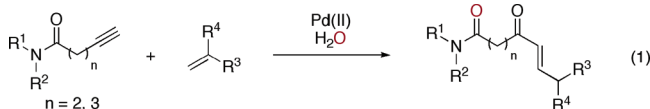
We began the development of this reaction by defining its basic requirements with respect to the alkyne substrate and the reaction conditions. Several alkynes were examined for their ability to react with styrene in the presence of various palladium salts. We discovered that alkynamides possessing a pentyn- or hexynamide backbone were required for efficient α,β-unsaturated ketone formation (Table 1). For example, slow addition of N-benzyl-N-methylpent-4-ynamide to a mixture of 1.5 equiv of styrene and 1.0 equiv of Na_2PdCl_4 in MeCN–H_2O (3:2) at room temperature provided the E-α,β unsaturated ketone product in 53% isolated yield (Table 1, entry 4), whereas the analogous propyn-, butyn- and heptynamide substrates did not generate significant desired product under these conditions (Table 1, entries 2 and 8). Furthermore, no α,β-unsaturated ketone was observed when water was omitted from the reaction (Table 1, entry 3). The use of p-benzoquinone as a stoichiometric oxidant enabled multiple turnovers with 0.2 equiv of Pd(II) to provide enone products in 54–58% yield (Table 1, entry 6 and 7).

On the basis of the requirement for a pentynamide or hexynamide backbone, we hypothesized that α,β-unsaturated ketone formation proceeds through a cyclic oxypalladation intermediate.[5] To test this proposal, we performed an ^{17}O labeling experiment. When the reaction between N-benzyl-N-methylpent-4-ynamide (1) and styrene was conducted in MeCN-$^{17}OH_2$ (3:2), ^{17}O NMR revealed the presence of broad peak at 318.5 ppm that is characteristic of an amide C=^{17}O (eq 2) but inconsistent with an enone C=^{17}O (eq 3).[6] This result strongly suggests that the reaction proceeds through a cyclic oxypalladation intermediate (eq 2), rather than through a

Table 1. Initial Observations[a]

entry	n	Pd(II) (equiv)/oxidant (equiv)	additive	yield (%)[b]
1	0, 1	Na_2PdCl_4 (1)/−	none	<1
2	0, 1	Na_2PdCl_4 (1)/−	H_2O (1.6 mL)	<1
3	2	Na_2PdCl_4 (1)/−	none	<1
4	2	Na_2PdCl_4 (1)/−	H_2O (1.6 mL)	53
5	2	Na_2PdCl_4 (0.2)/−	H_2O (1.6 mL)	8
6	**2**	**Na_2PdCl_4 (0.2)/p-benzoquinone (1.5)**	**H_2O (1.6 mL)**	**58**
7	**3**	**Na_2PdCl_4 (0.2)/p-benzoquinone (1.5)**	**H_2O (1.6 mL)**	**54**
8	4	Na_2PdCl_4 (0.2)/p-benzoquinone (1.5)	H_2O (1.6 mL)	<1

[a] Reactions were conducted at room temperature with 0.15 mmol of alkene in MeCN (2.4 mL) and 0.1 mmol of alkyne added dropwise over 5 h. [b] Isolated yield.

acyclic intermediate that would result from the direct hydration of a Pd(II)-alkyne complex (eq 3).[7]


$$(2)$$

$$(3)$$
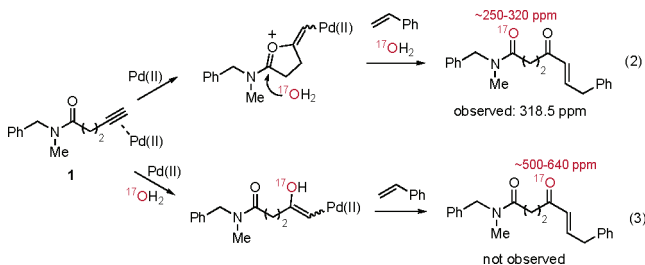
The scope of the reaction was further examined under optimized conditions using 0.15 equiv of Na_2PdCl_4, 0.2 equiv of $CuCl_2$, and molecular oxygen as the terminal oxidant in MeCN–H_2O (5:1) (Table 2). Pentyn- or hexynamides containing both secondary and tertiary amides were reactive under these conditions. In addition to styrene and α-methylstyrene, a variety of terminal alkenes were effective substrates, including long-chain unactivated alkenes. Desired α,β-unsaturated ketone products in Table 2 were obtained with >99:1 E/Z stereoselectivity and >5:1 (for long-chain alkenes) to >20:1 (for styrenes) regioselectivity. The reaction is compatible with ester, carbamate, nitrile, acetate, and alkyl bromide functionalities. The high stereoselectivity in the reaction of long-chain unactivated terminal alkenes (Table 2, entries 10–16) is noteworthy in comparison with the intermolecular Heck reaction of unactivated alkenes, which typically exhibits lower selectivity (E/Z = ∼2.5:1 to ∼6:1[8]).

Although a cyclic oxypalladation intermediate has been proposed in the Pd(II)-catalyzed hydration of alkynyl ketones,[5] pentynyl ketones such as hex-5-yn-2-one and 2-prop-2-ynylcyclopentanone were not reactive under the above conditions, further demonstrating the necessity of the amide group. We also note that the Wacker

Table 2. Reaction Scope of Pd(II)-Catalyzed Intermolecular Reaction of Alkynamides and Alkenes[a]

entry	alkyne	alkene	product	yield (%)[b]
1	Ph-N(Me)-C(O)-CH2-C≡CH	CH2=CH-Ph		53[c]
2	Ph-NH-C(O)-CH2-C≡CH	CH2=CH-Ph		68[c]
3 4	PMB-NH-C(O)-(CH2)n-1-C≡CH	CH2=CH-Ph		n = 2 74[c] / n = 3 62[c]
	PMB: p-MeOC6H4CH2-			
5	PMB-N(CH2Ph)-C(O)-CH2-C≡CH	CH2=CH-Ph		83[c]
6 7	Me-N(Me)-C(O)-(CH2)n-1-C≡CH	CH2=CH-Ph		n = 2 58[c] / n = 3 74[c]
8	C(O)-NH-CH2-C≡CH	CH2=CH-Ph		72[c]
9	PMB-NH-C(O)-CH2-C≡CH	isopropenyl-Ph		73
10 11	PMB-NH-C(O)-CH2-C≡CH	CH2=CH-(CH2)m-CH3		m = 3 80[d] / m = 8 65[d]
12 13 14 15	PMB-NH-C(O)-CH2-C≡CH	CH2=CH-(CH2)3-R5		R5 = CN 71[d] / R5 = CO2Et 54[d] / R5 = OAc 75[d] / R5 = Br 76[d]
16	PMB-NH-C(O)-CH2-C≡CH	CH2=CH-(CH2)8-NH-BOC		55[d]

[a] Reactions were conducted at room temperature or 40 °C with 15 mol % of Na2PdCl4·3H2O, 20 mol % of CuCl2·2H2O, 1 atm O2, 1.5 equiv of alkene in MeCN–H2O (5:1), and 1.0 equiv of alkyne added by dropwise addition for 8–12 h. [b] Isolated yield. [c] Linear:branched regioselectivity >99:1. [d] Linear:branched regioselectivity >5:1.

Scheme 1. Proposed Mechanism
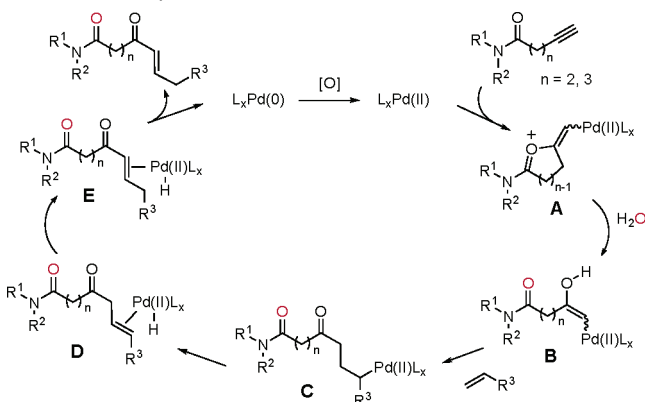
oxidation product[9] derived from styrene, acetophenone, was not observed under these conditions.

On the basis of the above observations, a possible mechanism for the reaction is shown in Scheme 1. We propose that the initial step involves the activation of the alkynamide with Pd(II) to provide the cyclic oxypalladation intermediate **A**. This intermediate is then hydrated to generate acyclic oxypalladation intermediate **B** in which the oxygen from water is incorporated into the amide carbonyl. Intermediate **B** reacts with an alkene substrate through a Heck-like process[10] resulting in Pd-alkyl species **C**. β-Hydride elimination generates a Pd-alkene complex such as **D** and sequential olefin insertion–β-hydride elimination steps result in migration of the olefin to the α,β position in **E**.[11] Release of α,β-unsaturated ketone product followed by reductive elimination results in Pd(0), which is oxidized to regenerate Pd(II).

In summary, we have demonstrated the Pd(II)-catalyzed intermolecular oxidative coupling of alkynamides and alkenes to provide α,β-unsaturated ketones with high stereo- and regioselectivity under very mild conditions. These findings identify alkynamides as efficient oxypalladation precursors that undergo hydration followed by a Heck-type process. Further studies to explore the reactivity of intermediates proposed in Scheme 1 are underway.

Supporting Information Available: Experimental procedures and spectral data for new compounds. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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JA068886F