Communication

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J. Am. Chem. Soc., **2007**, 129 (41), 12404-12405• DOI: 10.1021/ja075802+ • Publication Date (Web): 22 September 2007

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Published on Web 09/22/2007

Copper-Catalyzed Arylation of Heterocycle C−H Bonds

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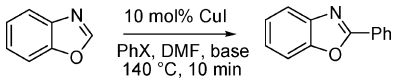
Because many pharmaceuticals contain heterocycle-aryl linkages, arylation of heterocycles has received significant attention in the recent years.[1] The shortest and most efficient routes to these compounds involve direct functionalization of heterocycle C−H bonds.[2] In general, most efforts in cross-coupling methodologies currently are geared toward the replacement of aryl iodides with cheaper aryl chlorides.[3] However, for realistic catalyst loadings it is more cost-efficient to replace the expensive transition metal catalyst, usually palladium or rhodium, with a cheaper one.[4] Use of copper catalysts for the amination and Stille- or Suzuki-type couplings has been demonstrated.[5] Copper-catalyzed direct heterocycle C−H arylation reactions are unknown.[6,7] We report here a general method for the copper-catalyzed heterocycle arylation by aryl iodides. In addition to electron-rich five-membered heterocycles, electron-deficient pyridine oxides can also be arylated. Preliminary mechanistic studies of the arylation are also reported.

Our attention was drawn to the observation that copper salts can affect the regioselectivity of palladium-catalyzed electron-rich heterocycle arylation. Pioneering work in this field was performed by Miura and co-workers who demonstrated that *N*-methylimidazole is arylated in the 2-position if a combination of catalytic Pd and stoichiometric Cu is used, and in the 5-position if catalytic Pd is used.[7] This effect may arise from the involvement of organocopper intermediates in the reaction. If the presumed intermediate could be generated without a palladium cocatalyst, a cheap and efficient method for the heterocycle arylation would be achieved. The organocopper species could be generated by using a stronger base instead of the commonly used cesium or potassium carbonates. Several amide and alkoxide bases were screened in the phenylation of benzoxazole. The best results were obtained by using lithium or potassium *tert*-butoxides (Table 1), with LiO^{t}Bu/aryl iodide combination affording the highest yields. Equally good results can be obtained in DMF, DMA, DMPU, or toluene−DMF mixtures. Commercial, non-anhydrous DMF can be used in all reactions.

The scope with respect to aryl iodide is presented in Table 2. The arylation of benzoxazole shows that electron-deficient (entries 1 and 2) as well as electron-rich (entries 3−7) aryl iodides are reactive. Substantial steric hindrance is tolerated on the aryl iodide (entries 5 and 6). Heteroaryl iodides are also reactive (entry 8). Yields are uniformly excellent, with the exception of mesityl iodide (entry 6).

The scope with respect to the heterocycles is presented in Table 3. Oxazole can be monoarylated in 59% yield, with 7% of the diarylated product isolated (entry 1). 1,3-Thiazole is diarylated in 59% yield (entry 2). 4,5-Dimethylthiazole and benzothiazole are also reactive (entries 3 and 4). 1,2,4-Triazole, benzimidazole, and caffeine are arylated in good yields (entries 5−7). Interestingly, electron-deficient 2-phenylpyridine oxide is arylated in the 6-position in a 66% yield.[8] 2-Phenylpyridine and *N*-methylindole were found to be unreactive under these reaction conditions. In most cases, LiO^{t}Bu affords the best yields. However, in the case of imidazole or triazole derivatives (entries 5−7) use of KO^{t}Bu or KO^{t}Bu/LiO^{t}Bu mixture as a base afforded higher yields.

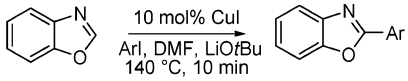
Table 1. Optimization of the Arylation Conditions[a]

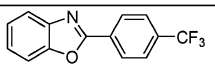
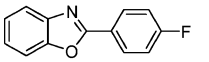
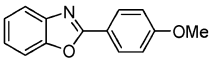
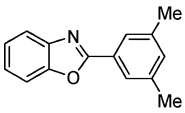
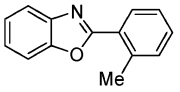
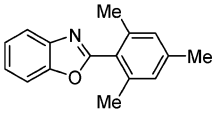
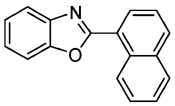
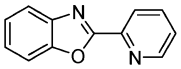


entry	base	PhX	yield, %
1	KO^{t}Bu	PhF or PhOTs	no arylation
2[b]	KO^{t}Bu	PhCl	40
3	KO^{t}Bu	PhBr	51
4	KO^{t}Bu	PhI	61
5	LiO^{t}Bu	PhCl, PhBr, or PhOTs	no arylation
6	LiO^{t}Bu	PhI	93

[a] Substrate (1 equiv), aryl halide (3 equiv), base (2 equiv). Yields are isolated yields. [b] PhCl (4 equiv), base (3 equiv).

Table 2. Arylation Scope with Respect to Aryl Iodides[a]

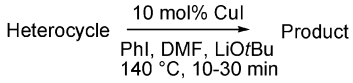


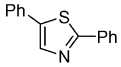
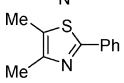
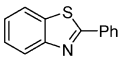
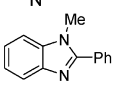
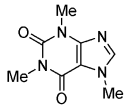
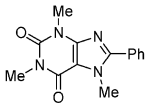
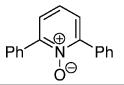
Entry	ArI	Product	Yield, %
1	4-$CF_3C_6H_4I$		91
2	4-FC_6H_4I		90
3	4-$MeOC_6H_4I$		80
4	3,5-$Me_2C_6H_3I$		85
5	2-MeC_6H_4I		91
6	2,4,6-$Me_3C_6H_2I$		55
7	1-Iodonaphthalene		90
8	2-Iodopyridine		89

[a] Substrate (1 equiv), aryl iodide (3 equiv), base (2 equiv). Yields are isolated yields.

10.1021/ja075802+ CCC: $37.00

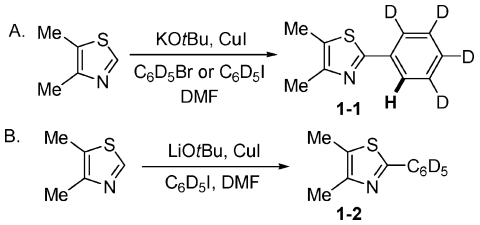
Table 3. Arylation Scope with Respect to Heterocycles[a]



Entry	Heterocycle	Product	Yield, %
1[b]			59
2[c]			59
3			84
4			82
5[d]			57
6[e]			89
7[d]			78
8			66

[a] Substrate (1 equiv), iodobenzene (3 equiv), base (2 equiv). Yields are isolated yields. [b] 2,5-Diphenyloxazole also isolated (7%). [c] 2-Phenylthiazole also isolated (37%). [d] KO^{t}Bu base. [e] LiO^{t}Bu/KO^{t}Bu base (1:1).

Scheme 1. Mechanistic Investigations



We have carried out preliminary mechanistic investigations of the coupling process (Scheme 1). The arylation employing KO^{t}Bu base is successful for aryl iodides, bromides, and chlorides, although the yields are moderate. If 4,5-dimethylthiazole is reacted with iodo- or bromobenzene-d_5 using KO^{t}Bu as a base (Scheme 1A), tetradeuterated product **1**−**1** is obtained. A single hydrogen is introduced at the ortho position of the phenyl group. This observation can be explained by assuming that the reaction proceeds via a copper-assisted benzyne-type mechanism.[9,10] No H−D exchange is observed if pentadeuterated **1**−**2** is submitted to the reaction conditions of Scheme 1A. If LiO^{t}Bu is used as a base, hydrogen incorporation is not observed (Scheme 1B, **1**−**2**). Involvement of benzyne intermediate is unlikely in this case. Presumably, heterocycle deprotonation by *tert*-butoxide (perhaps assisted by copper precoordination to the heterocycle)[2h] followed by lithium−copper transmetallation and reaction of the organocopper species with aryl iodide leads to the arylation product. No product (LiO^{t}Bu base; PhI) or only a trace of the product (<2%; KO^{t}Bu base; PhI) was obtained if CuI was omitted from the reaction of Scheme 1.

In conclusion, a new method for the direct, copper-catalyzed arylation of heterocycle C−H bonds by aryl halides has been developed. In addition to electron-rich five-membered heterocycles, electron-poor pyridine oxides can also be arylated. The best results are obtained by using a combination of lithium *t*-butoxide base and aryl iodide coupling partner. The generality and ready availability of stating materials should make this method useful for organic synthesis.

Acknowledgment. We thank the Welch Foundation (Grant No. E-1571) and the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (Grant No. R01GM077635) for supporting this research.

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

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(4) The following is the cost breakdown of a molar scale reaction run with 3 equiv of aryl halide and 5 mol % of palladium acetate or 10 mol % of copper iodide catalyst. The cost of the palladium-catalyzed reaction is \$11 (chlorobenzene) + \$403 ($Pd(OAc)_2$). The cost of the copper-catalyzed reaction is \$150 (iodobenzene) + \$3 (CuI; Aldrich prices). An expensive ligand is usually used for palladium-catalyzed reactions.

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(10) Arylation of 4,5-dimethylthiazole by *p*-tolyl bromide under conditions of Scheme 1A affords a mixture of *m*-tolyl- and *p*-tolylderivatives. See Supporting Information for details.

JA075802+