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Palladium-catalyzed domino Heck/ring opening of sulfolenes/desulfitative coupling: regio- and stereoselective synthesis of alkylated conjugated dienes

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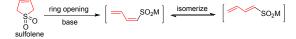
A novel palladium-catalyzed regio- and stereoselective dienylation via a combination of cascade carbopalladation and a subsequent desulfitative coupling after the base-induced ring opening of sulfolenes has been described. In this reaction, a range of *Z*-selective conjugated dienes bearing oxindoles or isoquinolinediones are obtained in moderate yields.

Introduction

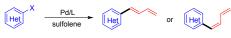
Compounds incorporating conjugated dienes found in a wide array of both natural products and pharmaceuticals.¹ Diene motifs are important synthetic building blocks that are commonly used in chemical transformations, such as difunctionalizations,² hydrofunctionalizations,³ and cycloaddition reactions.⁴ In view of its important application value, great extensive effort has been devoted to developing efficient protocols for preparing conjugated diene compounds. The most common method is based on C₂ and C₂ coupling (e.g. Mizoroki-Heck reaction, Suzuki coupling reaction) through a central sigma bond formation.⁵ Furthermore, reacting C₃ with C1 synthon (e.g. Wittig-type olefination) is also an alternative approach to realize dienylation.⁶ For instance, the group of Stahl developed aerobic oxidative Heck reactions for synthesis of branched conjugated dienes.⁷ Engle and co-workers realized substituted 1,3-dienes via six-membered palladacycles.8 The Wang group reported palladium-catalyzed oxidative crosscoupling to form furyl substituted conjugated dienes.⁹ The Carrow group has recently made an impressive breakthrough to generate substituted 1,3-dienes and 1,3,5-trienes by a mild palladium-catalyzed aerobic coupling of boronic acids with cyclobutene.¹⁰ However, among these established methods, the vast majority of reported methods were limited to synthesis of aryl substituted conjugated dienes, relatively few studies devoted to the synthesis of alkylated conjugated dienes. Moreover, due to the less stability than E-configuration, the research of conjugated dienes with Z-configuration is relatively rare. Therefore, efficient and convenient synthetic

methods to furnish alkylated conjugated 1,3-dienes in a regioand *Z*-stereoselective fashion need to be further developed.

(a) The ring opening reaction of sulfolene for producing sulfinate compound (ref 11)



(b) Larionov's work: the dienylation of arene through the sulfolene ring opening process (ref 12)



highly regio- and stereoselectivity

(c) This work: palladium-catalyzed cascade alkylated dienylation via the sulfolene ring opening reaction



Scheme 1. Synthesis of conjugated 1,3-dienes.

On the other hand, the salt of dienylsulfinic acids can be prepared through the ring opening reaction of sulfolene compounds that are stable and readily accessible from simple precursors.¹¹ Based on the above synthetic property, the pioneering work was reported by Larionov and co-workers to achieve palladium-catalyzed dienylation of arenes enabled by a regioselective base-induced ring opening of readily available sulfolenes.¹² However, alkylated conjugated dienylation has never been realized via a similar strategy. Inspired by previous works¹³ and our research interest in domino carbopalladation reactions,¹⁴ we envision that sulfolenes could be suitable dienylation reagents applying in transient σ -alkylpalladium(II) catalyzed domino reaction. Herein, we developed a palladium catalyzed regio- and stereoselective dienylation through an intramolecular domino cyclization/ring opening of sulfolenes/desulfitative coupling pathway to provide a range of alkylated conjugated diene compounds by introducing C4 unit directly (Scheme 1). Notably, due to the possible isomerization of dienylsulfinate salts at higher temperatures or with catalytic amounts of base,¹⁵ controlling the stereoselectivity of dienylation still remains a challenging task.

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Results and discussion

We commenced our studies using N-(2-iodophenyl)-Nmethylmethacrylamide (1a) and 2,5-dihydrothiophene 1,1dioxide (2a) for optimization of the reaction conditions (Table 1). An initial test led to the target product 3a in 32% isolated yield and with 12:1 Z/E ratio in the presence of PPh₃ and ^tBuOK in dioxane at 90 ° C for 12 h (entry 1). The influence of the base was examined. Lower yields and diastereoselectivity were observed in the case of CH_3OK and K_2CO_3 (entries 2 and 3). Other bases, including 'BuOLi, 'BuONa and Cs₂CO₃, failed to give the target product. It should be noted that combination of K₂CO₃ and ^tBuOK as the base could significantly facilitate the transformation, affording the desired product 3a in 54% isolated yield with high Z-diastereoselectivity (>20:1, entry 4). In the following optimization, A series of ligands were also screened, and $P(p-tolyl)_3$ proved to be the most competent ligand providing the target product in 71% yield with >20:1(21:1) Z/E ratio (entries 5-11). Solvent screening indicated that the yields were dramatically reduced by replacing dioxane with toluene or 1,2-dichloroethane (DCE). 1,2-dimethoxyethane (DME) and trahydrofuran (THF) were also inferior to dioxane (entries 12-16). Finally, investigation of the reaction temperature showed that increasing and reducing temperature had a negative effect on the reaction (entries 17 and 18).

investigated. As shown in Table 2. The acrylamide substrates 1b-1i bearing a range of functional groups, including electrondonating groups (-Me and -OMe) and electron-withdrawing groups (-F, -Cl, -CO₂Me and -CF₃), at the different positions on the benzene ring were tested, and the corresponding products **3b-i** were achieved with *Z/E* ratio values (from 10:1 to 22:1) in 39%-76% yields. The exact structure of 3i was further unambiguously elucidated by single crystal X-ray crystallography (see the Supporting Information)¹⁶. Note that 2-phenylacrylamide could also be converted to the dienylation product **3***j*, albeit in a lower yield of 48% with a Z/E ratio value. Several substituents, namely Et, *n*-Pr and *n*-Bu on the nitrogen atom were also well tolerated under the optimal reaction conditions. Additionally, various N-benzyl groups (Bn, 4-MeBn, and 4-OCH₃Bn) were investigated, giving access to the desired products **3n-p** in 45-61% yields with moderate to high selectivity. Furthermore, synthetic transformation of **3b** in the presence of LiAlH₄ were explored, the reduction of product 3b' was obtained in 94% yield. Finally, methylacrylamide 1a (2 mmol) and sulfolene 2a (4 mmol) were employed to examine the scability and desired product 3a was formed in 64% yield with similar selectivity under the standard reaction conditions.

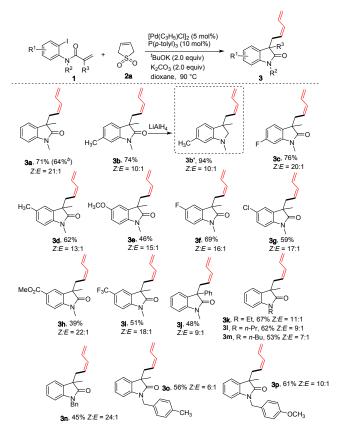
Table 2. Results of the reaction of acrylamide and sulfolene^a

Table 1. Optimization of the reaction conditions^a

Ĺ			I(C ₃ H ₅)CI]₂ (5.0 m ligand (10 mol%) base, solvent 90 °C		I NO
1a		2a	3a		
Entry	Ligand	Base	Solvent	Yield (%)	Z/E Ratio ^d
1	PPh ₃	^t BuOK	dioxane	32	12:1
2	PPh ₃	CH₃OK	dioxane	<10	3:1
3	PPh ₃	K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	21	1.8:1
4	PPh₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	54	>20:1
5	P(2-furyl) ₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	27	8:1
6	Sphos	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	<10	5:1
7	DPEphos	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	<10	3:1
8	dppb	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	19	1:1
9	$P(p-FC_6H_5)_3$	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	39	>20:1
10	P(<i>p</i> -tolyl)₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	71	>20:1
11	$P(p-MeOC_6H_5)_3$	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	66	>20:1
12	P(p-tolyl) ₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	MeCN	14	>20:1
13	P(p-tolyl) ₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	toluene	<10	>20:1
14	P(p-tolyl) ₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	DCE	<10	>20:1
15	P(p-tolyl) ₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	DME	55	>20:1
16	P(p-tolyl) ₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	THF	40	13:1
17 ^b	P(p-tolyl)₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	62	>20:1
18 ^c	P(p-tolyl) ₃	^t BuOK/K ₂ CO ₃	dioxane	58	>20:1
aReactio	on conditions unle	ss otherwise no	oted: 1a (0.2	mmol), 2a	(0.4 mmol),

 $[Pd(C_3H_3)Cl]_2$ (5 mol%), ligand (10 mol%), base (0.4 mmol), solvent (2.0 mL, 0.1 M), 90 °C, 12 h under argon atmosphere conditions. ^b80 °C. ^c100 °C. ^dDetermined by GC-MS.

Under the conditions established above, the substrate scope of this palladium-catalyzed intramolecular domino Heck/ring opening of sulfolenes/desulfitative coupling reaction was then



^{*a*}Reaction conditions unless otherwise noted: **1** (0.2 mmol), **2a** (0.4 mmol), [Pd(C₃H₅)Cl]₂ (5 mol%), P(*p*-tolyl)₃ (10 mol%), K₂CO₃ (0.4 mmol), ^tBuOK (0.4 mmol), dioxane (2.0 mL, 0.1 M), 90 °C, 12 h under argon atmosphere conditions. ^{*b*}**1a** (2.0 mmol).

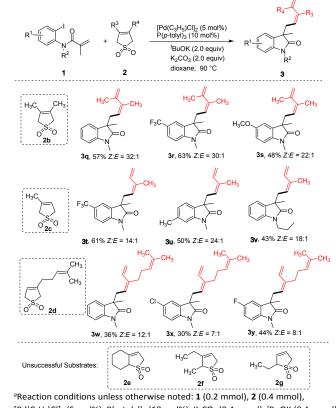
Next, the regio- and stereoselectivity of dienylation with different sulfolenes were investigated (Table 3). The desired

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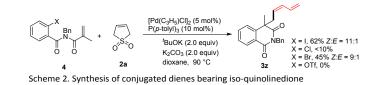
conjugated dienes were produced in all these cases. For example, substituted conjugated dienes **3q-s** were produced in moderate yields and satisfactory stereoselectivity with 3,4dimethyl sulfolene (**2b**) as substrate. Similarly, isoprene- and myrcene-derived sulfolenes (**2c** and **2d**) gave the corresponding products **3t-y** in acceptable yields. The *Z*diastereoselectivity of **3q**, **3t** and **3y** were further confirmed by the NOE analysis (see the Supporting Information). Unfortunately, when performing this dienylation with substrates **2e-g**, all of them did not work.¹⁷

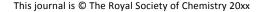
Table 3. Substrate scope



[Pd(C₃H₅)Cl]₂ (5 mol%), P(p-tolyl)₃ (10 mol%), K₂CO₃ (0.4 mmol), 'BuOK (0.4 mmol), dioxane (2.0 mL, 0.1 M), 90 °C, 12 h under argon atmosphere conditions.

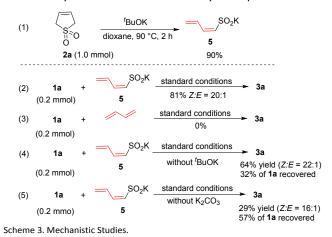
To ascertain further the scope of this method, reactions with *N*-methacryloylbenzamide **4** and sulfolene **2a** was conducted under the standard conditions (Scheme 2). The conjugated dienes bearing isoquinolinedione **3z** was obtained in reasonable yield and selectivity. As a comparison, a lower yield was obtained for the reaction of aryl chloride or bromide and no product was observed when using aryltriflate as the substrate, which showed that the disconnection of C-X bonds of different substrates have a great effect on this cascade dienylation reaction.

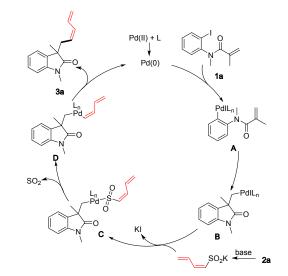




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A number of control experiments were conducted to shed light on the reaction mechanism (Scheme 3). Sulfolene **2a** can be rapid transformed into potassium sulfinate **5** in the presence of potassium *tert*-butoxide at 90 °C in dioxane. When treated **5** with acrylamide **1a** under standard reaction conditions, the target product **3a** was obtained in 81% yield with good selectivity, while no reaction was observed when 1,3-butadiene was applied. From this result, it was reasonable to infer that dienylsulfinates are the intermediates of the dienylation reaction. In additionally, without *tert*-butoxide or potassium carbonate under standard conditions, the reaction could not proceed completely and only 64% and 29% yields of **3a** were obtained, respectively. These outcomes indicate that dual-base system is crucial for the dienylation process.





Scheme 4. Proposed reaction mechanism.

On the basis of the above experimental results and literature reports,¹⁸ a mechanistic pathway is proposed in Scheme 4. Oxidative addition of Pd(0) to the carbon-halogen bond followed by intramolecular carbopalladation to generate a primary C(sp³)-Pd(II) species **B**. Assisted by base, the potassium dienylsulfinate generated by the ring opening of sulfolene **2a** undergoes cross-coupling with alkylpalladium **B** to afford intermediate **C**. Subsequently, The elimination of sulfur dioxide generates intermediate **D**, which undergoes reductive

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elimination to produce product **3a** and meanwhile regenerate Pd(0) species for the catalytic cycle.

Conclusions

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In summary, we have established an efficient palladiumcatalyzed domino cyclization for accessing a series of alkylated conjugated dienes. The reaction proceeds through a sequence of Heck cyclization, ring opening of sulfolenes and subsequent desulfitative coupling. Importantly, the developed dienylation method shows good regio- and stereoselectivity and compatibility of substrates. Further investigations toward exploring this type of domino reaction are still in progress in our laboratory.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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