Category

Synthesis of Heterocycles

Key words

chromones

O-arvlation

S_NAr reaction



J. ZHAO, Y. ZHAO, H. FU* (TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY, BEIJING, P. R. OF CHINA) Transition-Metal-Free Intramolecular Ullmann-Type O-Arylation: Synthesis of Chromone Derivatives

 R^2 = Me, Et, Ph, 2-BrC₆H₄, 4-MeC₆H₄, 4-ClC₆H₄, 4-MeOC₆H₄, 3,4-(MeO)₂C₆H₄

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Transition-Metal-Free S_NAr-Type Synthesis of **Chromones**

Significance: This report represents a caveat publication. Aiming to develop a copper-catalyzed synthesis of chromones 2 via an intramolecular Ullmann O-arylation of (ortho-halophenyl)propane-1,3-diones 1, Fu and co-workers, to their credit, carried out a control experiment without a copper catalyst. This led to the discovery that the O-arylation proceeded more efficiently without the aid of a transition metal, thus representing a normal intramolecular S_NAr process. The reaction was carried out under basic conditions (K₂CO₃, Na₂CO₃, K₃PO₄) in polar aprotic solvents (DMF, DMSO, NMP); the combination of K₂CO₃ and DMF giving the best results. Surprisingly, aryl bromides were more reactive than aryl chlorides, although both gave good to high yields of chromone products. Starting materials $\mathbf{1}$ with $R^2 = \text{aryl}$ groups gave higher yields compared to R^2 = aliphatic ones. Also, R¹ = EDG showed lower reactivity. Control experiments showed that 1) oxygen has no effect on the reaction and 2) the reaction does not proceed through a radical pathway. Surprisingly, the simple intermolecular O-arylation of 1-bromo-2-nitrobenzene with phenol under the same conditions failed.

Comment: Aryl ethers are classically prepared by copper-mediated Ullmann and palladiumcatalyzed Buchwald-Hartwig coupling reactions of aryl halides with phenols. Intramolecular metalcatalyzed O-arylation couplings have been applied to the synthesis of various heteroaromatics including chromones (Q. Yang, H. Alper J. Org. Chem. **2010**, 75, 948). Chromones are ubiquitous in Nature, especially in the class of plant secondary metabolites, for example flavonoids (see Book below). Metal-free strategies to chromones often suffer from harsh conditions, poor substituent tolerance and low yields (see Review below). A recent synthesis of chromones involves the sequential intramolecular anionic ortho-Fries rearrangement-Michael addition of 2-but-2-ynoyl aryl Ocarbamates (T. K. Macklin, J. Panteleev, V. Snieckus Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. 2008, 47, 2097). The present method represents a convenient and efficient access to chromones 2 starting from 1 prepared via a simple Claisen condensation between methyl ortho-halobenzoate derivatives and ketones. This work teaches the necessity for execution of control experiments in all studies concerned with transition-metal-catalyzed C-C, C-O, and C-N couplings.

Book: J. B. Harborne, H. Baxter The Handbook of Natural Flavonoids, Vol. 1; John Wiley & Sons: Chichester, UK, 1999.

Review: N.-G. Li, Z.-H. Shi, Y.-P. Tang, H.-Y. Ma, J.-P. Yang, B.-Q. Li, Z.-J. Wang, S.-L. Song, J.-A. Duan J. Heterocycl. Chem. 2010, 47, 785-798.

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