



Short communication

Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ catalyzed condensation of β-naphthol and aldehydes in fluorous solvent: One-pot synthesis of 14-substituted-14*H*-dibenzo[*a,j*]xanthenes

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ABSTRACT

A facile synthesis of 14-substituted-14*H*-dibenzo[*a,j*]xanthenes was proposed by one-pot condensation of β-naphthol with aryl or alkyl aldehydes by using Scandium bis(perfluorooctanesulfonyl)imide complex as catalyst and perfluorodecalin as sole solvent.

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1. Introduction

Xanthenes, especially benzoxanthenes, have drawn much attention in the field of medicinal chemistry. These oxygen-containing heterocycles have been reported to exert various biological and therapeutic properties in antibacterial [1], antiviral [2], and anti-inflammatory activities [3], as well as in photodynamic therapy (PDT) [4]. Furthermore, they are used as dyes [5], or as fluorescent materials for the visualization of biomolecular assemblies [6]. Their application is also found in laser technologies [7].

The synthesis of benzoxanthenes has been achieved by various methods [8]. Among them, condensation of β-naphthol with aldehydes has been explored using different catalysts such as sulfamic acid [9], *p*-TSA [10], selectfluorTM [11], I₂ [12], silica sulfuric acid [13] and Yb(OTf)₃ [14]. However, these catalyst systems suffer from some limitation such as long reaction time, high catalyst loadings, use of toxic solvent or special apparatus. The search for milder and more environmentally benign conditions is, therefore, highly demanding for the synthesis of these compounds.

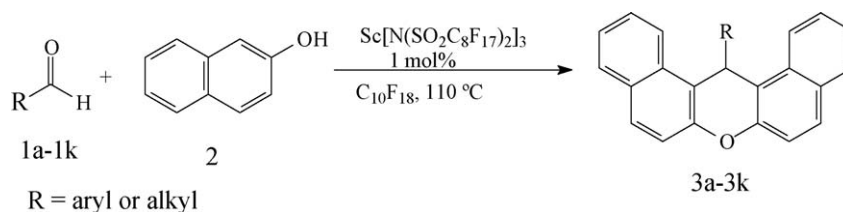
Metal (e.g. Sn, Sc and Yb) complexes with bis(perfluorooctanesulfonyl)imide ligands are active and recyclable catalysts in the fluorous immobilized phase for Baeyer–Villiger oxidation [15], Diels–Alder reaction [16], esterification [17] and Friedel–Crafts acylation [18], far superior to the corresponding metal trifluor-

omethanesulfonates. Moreover, they are water-repellent due to highly “fluorous” nature brought about by the perfluoroalkyl chains surrounding the central metal. It is also noted that perfluorocarbon solvents have some unique properties which make them attractive alternatives for conventional organic solvents [19]. In this work we report a mild and effective method for the preparation of aryl or alkyl-14*H*-dibenzo[*a,j*]xanthenes using Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ complex as catalyst in fluorous biphasic system. It was found that under mild conditions the catalyst can function efficiently at low catalytic loadings (1 mol%) and can be easily recovered and reused.

2. Results and discussion

As a model reaction we chose condensation of benzaldehyde and β-naphthol catalyzed by Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ complex in different solvent systems. As shown in Table 1, the highest yield (93%) was achieved when the reaction was conducted in perfluorodecalin (C₁₀F₁₈, *cis*- and *trans*-mixture) as a sole solvent at 110 °C for 5 h (Table 1, entry 8). In order to make the reaction more accessible, we explored different co-solvent systems taking a common general organic solvent. Unfortunately, the use of co-solvent system resulted in lower product yield under the similar conditions (Table 1, entries 1–7). Among the co-solvents studied, toluene was proved to be efficient (Table 1, entry 3) in terms of its relatively higher yield. Although the reasons why the use of co-solvent such as toluene decreases the product yield are not clear, we assumed that difference in solubility of the catalyst and the substrate in perfluorodecalin or in toluene would have an influence

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Scheme 1. Synthesis of 14-substituted-14H-dibenzo[a,j]xanthenes.

Table 1
Effect of co-solvents on the condensation^a.

Entry	Co-solvent	Time (h)	Yield (%) ^b
1	ClCH ₂ CH ₂ Cl	6	75
2	MeCN	6	23
3	PhMe	6	81
4	EtOH	6	67
5	MeOH	6	52
6	Dioxane	6	64
7	THF	6	20
8	–	5	93

^a Reaction conditions: benzaldehyde (1 mmol), β-naphthol (2 mmol), Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ (0.01 mmol), perfluorodecalin (1.5 mL), co-solvent (2 mL), 110 °C or refluxing.

^b Isolated yields.

on their effective miscibility. Based on these results, we employed only perfluorodecalin as sole solvent in the further experiments.

We then investigated the catalytic activity of different rare earth bis(perfluorooctanesulfonyl)imide complexes in the model reaction. The results are summarized in Table 2. It was found that several metal bis(perfluorooctanesulfonyl)imide complexes gave promising results. Especially, Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ was found to be the most effective catalyst (Table 2, entry 4) based on the product yield. The catalyst system is proved again to be important since the reaction hardly proceeded without catalyst and fluorosolvent (yield less than 5%).

Next, we examined the condensation of β-naphthol with various aldehydes in the presence of Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ in perfluorodecalin at 110 °C (Scheme 1). As listed in Table 3, in all cases the corresponding benzoxanthenes were obtained in good yields (70–96%) after 2–7 h. It was found that the nature of the substituent on the aromatic ring had a magnificent effect on the reaction rate. Generally, aromatic aldehydes with electron withdrawing group showed increased reaction rate (Table 3, entries 1–5). Interestingly, 4-hydroxybenzaldehyde also gave the desired product within a short reaction time in excellent yield (Table 3, entry 6). On the other hand, reactions with aliphatic aldehydes provided somewhat lower yields than those with aromatic aldehydes (Table 3, entries 10 and 11).

Table 2
Effect of various catalysts on the condensation^a.

Entry	Catalyst	Yield (%) ^b
1	Sn[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₄	75
2	Hf[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₄	82
3	Yb[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₃	90
4	Sc[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₃	93, 90, 92, 93, 92 ^c
5	Y[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₃	72
6	Sm[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₃	53
7	Eu[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₃	80
8	Td[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₃	32
9	Dy[N(SO ₂ C ₈ F ₁₇) ₂] ₃	57

^a Reaction conditions: benzaldehyde (1 mmol), β-naphthol (2 mmol), catalyst (0.01 mmol), perfluorodecalin (1.5 mL), 110 °C, 5 h.

^b Isolated yields.

^c Catalyst was reused for five times.

Table 3
Synthesis of 14-substituted-14H-dibenzo[a,j]xanthenes^a.

Entry	RCHO (1)	Time (h)	Product	Yield (%) ^b
1	2-ClC ₆ H ₄ (1a)	2.5	3a	91
2	4-ClC ₆ H ₄ (1b)	2	3b	96
3	2,4-Cl ₂ C ₆ H ₃ (1c)	2	3c	95
4	3-NO ₂ C ₆ H ₄ (1d)	3	3d	90
5	4-NO ₂ C ₆ H ₄ (1e)	2	3e	95
6	4-HOC ₆ H ₄ (1f)	2	3f	94
7	C ₆ H ₅ (1g)	5	3g	93
8	4-MeOC ₆ H ₄ (1h)	6	3h	85
9	4-MeC ₆ H ₄ (1i)	5.5	3i	91
10	CH ₃ CH ₂ (1j)	7	3j	75
11	CH ₃ CH ₂ CH ₂ (1k)	7	3k	70

^a Reaction conditions: aldehyde (1 mmol), β-naphthol (2 mmol), Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ (0.01 mmol), 110 °C.

^b Isolated yields.

The possibility of multi-use of Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ catalyst for the synthesis of phenyl derivative was also investigated. After separation of the product, fluorosolvent containing the catalyst was reused for the next cycle. As shown in Table 2, even after Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ catalyst was recycled five times, almost same isolated yield of the final product was realized.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, a simple and efficient method for the synthesis of 14-substituted-14H-dibenzo[a,j]xanthenes has been developed via condensation of β-naphthol with aldehydes catalyzed by Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃ complex in perfluorodecalin as a sole solvent. The attractive features of this protocol are its generality, easy work-up, and catalyst reusability.

4. Experimental

4.1. General

Melting points were obtained with Shimadzu DSC-50 thermal analyzer. Inductively coupled plasma (ICP) spectra were measured on Ultima2C apparatus. Elemental analyses were performed on a Yanagimoto MT3CHN recorder. IR spectra were recorded on a Bomem MB 154S infrared analyzer. ¹H NMR and ¹⁹F NMR spectra were recorded with Bruker Advance RX500. The perfluorodecalin and rare earth salts were purchased from Aldrich Co. Commercially available reagents were used without further purification.

4.2. Preparation of (C₈F₁₇SO₂)₂NH and Sc[N(SO₂C₈F₁₇)₂]₃

4.2.1. Preparation of (C₈F₁₇SO₂)₂NH

(C₈F₁₇SO₂)₂NH was prepared according to the literature [20,21]. Ammonia was added into perfluorooctanesulfonyl fluoride (36.7 g, 73 mmol) at –20 °C. After the stirring was held at –20 °C for about 1 h, it was then continued at room temperature for another 1 h. The solid product was acidified with 2 M HCl followed by addition of Et₂O. The organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄ and concentrated under reduced pressure, dried in vacuum to give

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