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Iridium catalyzed three component cycloaddition cascades to fused ring heterocycles

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history: Received 14 April 2016 Revised 27 April 2016 Accepted 9 May 2016 Available online xxxx ABSTRACT

A three component iridium-catalyzed 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reaction has been used for the synthesis of fused ring heterocycles as *endo/exo* isomers, in good yields with the formation of three new bonds and four stereo centers.

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Bicyclic pyrrolidines are important heterocycles and form the structural skeletons of a wide range of compounds which exhibit bioactivities for a variety of medical conditions. Some of these medicinal properties include HIV inhibitors,¹ as well as antifungal, antibacterial,² and antithrombotic activities³ (Fig. 1).

It has become increasingly more important in the drug discovery process that new facile methods are developed in which more complex variants of these heterocyclic scaffolds may be produced in 'greener' ways. This can be achieved by using more selective methods where the number of steps involved and the amount of solvents used and waste produced are reduced, allowing the process to be more efficient and environmentally friendly.

Nonstabilized azomethine ylides are highly reactive intermediates. Classical methods to generate nonstabilized azomethine ylides include desilylation of the methyl iminium ion,⁴ reaction of *N*-oxides with strong base,⁵ and condensation of α -amino acids with carbonyl compounds.⁶

Our group and others have been involved in generating stabilized and non-stabilized azomethine ylides and subsequent 1,3dipolar cycloaddition reactions either via a metal catalyzed route or a thermal decarboxylation pathway.^{6,7}

Indirect functionalization of alcohols using catalytic amounts of a metal complex and base which generates only water as a by-product is an attractive green alternative to standard C—C and C—N bond forming reactions. These cascades are termed as redox—neutral,

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 1133436520. *E-mail address:* V.Sridharan@leeds.ac.uk (V. Sridharan). hydrogen auto transfer or hydrogen borrowing processes. Our group and others have been involved in the alkylation of amines and active methylene compounds using alcohols catalyzed by iridium, rhodium, and ruthenium complexes, to form new C—N and C—C bonds.⁸

In this communication we report a novel one-pot three component iridium catalyzed dehydrogenation/1,3-dipolar cycloaddition cascade utilizing alcohols to generate fused-ring heterocycles with the formation of three new bonds and four stereo centers (Scheme 1, path A).

The initial reaction was performed using 3,4-dimethoxybenzylalcohol (1 mmol), L-proline (1.5 mmol), *N*-methylmaleimide (2 mmol), $C_{s_2}CO_3$ (0.2 mmol), and $[IrC_p*Cl_2]_2$ (0.05 mmol) in



Figure 1. Bioactive bicyclic pyrrolidines.

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Scheme 1. Ir-catalyzed three component cycloaddition cascade.

Table 1 Iridium catalyzed three component cycloaddition reaction^a



^a Dipolarophile (2 mmol), L-proline (1.2 mmol), an alcohol (1 mmol), Cs₂CO₃, (20 mol %), and [IrCp*Cl₂]₂ (5 mol %) toluene (10 mL) were stirred under reflux (110 °C 24 h). ^b Isomers were separated and isolated total yield.

^c Only major isomer was isolated.

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