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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Synthesis of 1-Methoxyphenanthrene by Palladium-Catalyzed Heck Reaction

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ABSTRACT

A novel methodology for the synthesis of 1-methoxy phenanthrene has been developed via a palladium-assisted 6π electrocyclic reaction followed by formaldehyde elimination.

Keywords: 1-methoxy phenanthrene, Intramolecular Heck, Phenanthrene, Palladium catalyzed C-C bond forming

1. INTRODUCTION

Palladium catalyzed C-C bond forming reaction is important for the synthesis of heterocyclic and carbocyclic compounds. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), more simply known as polyarenes, constitute an extraordinary large and diverse class of organic molecules.^{1,2} Within the chemical class of polycyclic aromatic compounds phenanthrene is an important core structure. The phenanthrene moiety can not only be found in several natural products, of which many exhibit interesting biological activity,³ but more recently phenanthrenes have also been shown as interesting ligands for novel catalyst systems.⁴ The discovery of the carcinogenic properties of polyarenes stimulated wide-ranging investigations of their structure activity relationships. Previously it was thought that PAHs are direct acting carcinogens, but this was proved to be wrong in latter stage. It is now recognized that PAHs require metabolic activation in order to express tumorigenic reactivity.^{5,6}

Therefore, the development of new short synthetic methods for this important class of organic compounds has regained importance. Several synthetic efforts for the preparation of PAH have been reported by

different groups, of which most common procedure involves the classical oxidative photocyclization of stilbene derivatives.⁷ Among other methods intramolecular Diels-Alder reaction,⁸ flash vacuum pyrolysis,⁹⁻¹² olefin metathesis,¹³ Friedel-Crafts type cyclization,¹⁴ dimerisation or trimerisation of acetylenes and arynes,¹⁵⁻¹⁶ transition metal catalyzed cycloisomerisation¹⁷⁻¹⁸ etc. are used as the key step for construction of a benzene ring for the synthesis of PAH. We also contributed in this field by synthesizing tri-substituted benzene derivatives via base catalyzed condensation and aromatization of various bromoaldehydes with active methylene compound.¹⁹

Palladium catalyzed activation of aromatic C-H bond has been used extensively in many organic synthesis since this reaction gives a solution for the construction of carbo- and heterocycles from the corresponding halides and triflates.²⁰⁻²⁶ Larocket *al* have developed a novel Palladium-catalyzed migration/C-H activation methodology for the synthesis of complex fused polycycles.^{27, 28} The major sources of PAHs are crude oil, coal, oil shale. Methyl phenanthrene, belong to an important group alkyl-aromatic hydrocarbons which are present in natural environments.

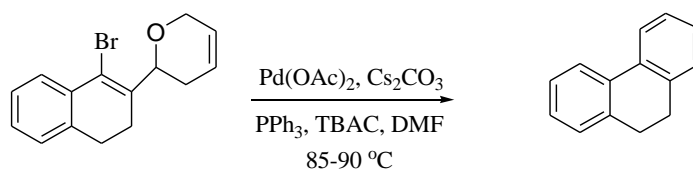
Methyl phenanthrene arises through the combustion of wood, coal; etc. There is a great variety of methods which are available for the synthesis of phenanthrene and its derivatives. Perhaps the most extensive method is the classical Haworth synthesis.

2. PRESENT WORK

Being inspired by the importance of this polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and 9, 10-dihydrophenanthrene we attempted to synthesize PAH derivatives in our laboratory. Although there are plenty of examples of dihydrophenanthrene synthesis but these procedures suffer from some limitations such as

drastic reaction conditions, toxic reagent and catalyst.

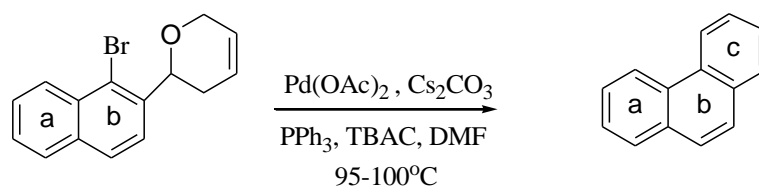
We first report a novel and rapid convenient approach to the synthesis of substituted 9, 10-dihydrophenanthrene along with its analogues by a palladium-catalyzed 6π electrocyclic reaction.²⁹ Recently, we described the palladium-catalyzed intramolecular Heck reaction by β -H elimination or C-H activation to afford a polycyclic pyran moiety.^{30,31} We were planning to apply this reaction for the synthesis of a bicyclic pyran ring, but surprisingly we obtained 9, 10-dihydrophenanthrene in good yield (Scheme 1).



(Scheme 1)

Then we have employed our methodology to the aromatic bromoaldehydes system, we got successful results to synthesize phenanthrene and alkyl phenanthrene in good yield.^{32, 33} Importance of this methodology is that we can introduce an alkyl group in any one or two positions

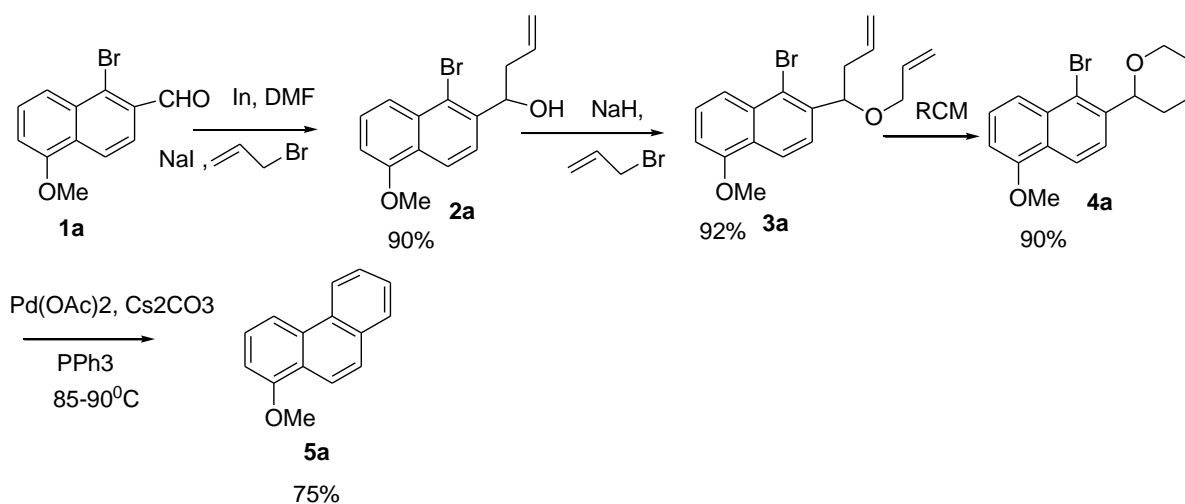
of newly formed benzene ring (c) of phenanthrene (Scheme 2). Here using this methodology we have synthesized 1-methoxy phenanthrene by palladium-catalyzed Heck reaction.



(Scheme 2)

First aromatic bromoaldehyde **1a** is treated with allyl bromide, sodium iodide in the presence of indium metal to obtain the corresponding alcohol **2a**. This alcohol is allylated in the presence of sodium hydride in THF medium at 0 °C to obtain the diallylated compound **3a** which is subjected to 2nd generation Grubbs catalyst to

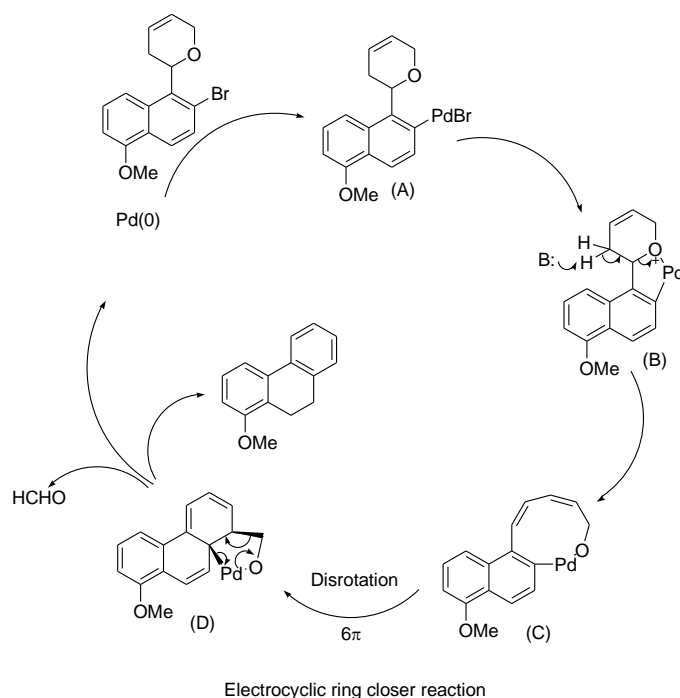
obtain the desired cyclic precursor **4a**. Then this cyclic precursor is finally treated with Pd(OAc)₂, PPh₃, Cs₂CO₃ in DMF solvent at 85-90 °C to afford 1-methoxy phenanthrenes **5a** in good yield which is shown in Scheme 3.



Scheme 3

The reaction mechanism presumably involves a 6π electrocyclic ring closer reaction followed by formaldehyde elimination. The catalytic cycle involves initial oxidation of the Pd(0) to generate

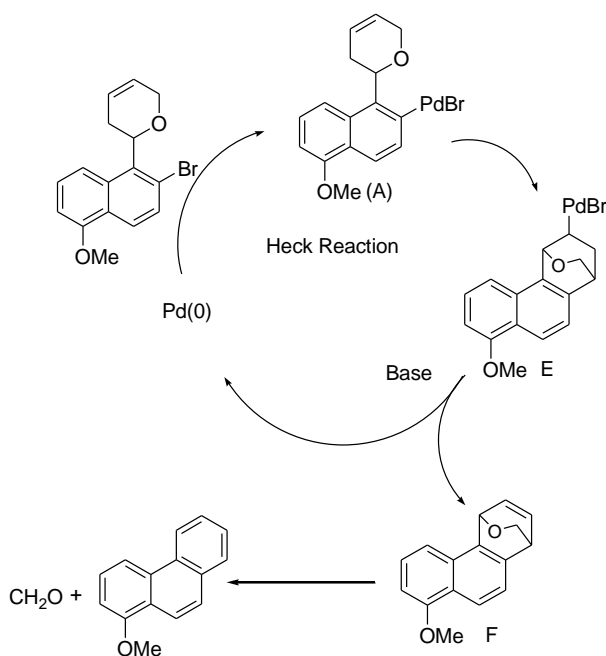
alkenyl palladium (II) intermediate (A) via oxidative addition of the Pd (0) to the substrate, which then co-ordinates with oxygen to generate the intermediate (B),



Scheme-4

This undergoes proton abstraction followed by rearrangement to afford a nine membered cyclic Pd-O complex (C). This complex undergoes 6π electrocyclic ring closer reaction forming complex (D), followed by formaldehyde elimination to afford 1-methoxy phenanthrene.

Lan et al. proposed an alternative mechanism that occurs through an intramolecular Heck³⁴ reaction. Using theoretical calculations they investigated both mechanisms and find that the intramolecular Heck mechanism (Scheme 5) is lower in energy than the electrocyclic pathway (Scheme 4).



Scheme-5

3. CONCLUSION

We have developed a new method for synthesis of 1-methoxy phenanthrene derivatives. This method also useful for the synthesis of higher homologous of polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons provided the efficient route to synthesis of suitable starting material.

Spectral data of compound 5a: Solid, ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz) δ : 4.04 (s, 3H), 7.03 (d, 1H, $J = 7.8$ Hz), 7.51-7.71 (m, 3H), 7.80 (d, 1H, $J = 9.1$ Hz), 7.95 (d, 1H, $J = 7.7$ Hz), 8.31 (t, 2H, $J = 8.9$), 8.70 (d, 1H, $J = 7.6$ Hz). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz) δ : 55.7, 105.8, 115, 120.3, 123, 123.3, 126, 126.5, 126.6, 126.7, 128.5, 130, 131.4, 132.3, 160.

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