**In Vivo Olefin Metathesis – challenges, approaches and applications**

Summarized enough

Summarized moderately

Lot of missing info

No info at all

Citation needed?

Citations are numbered by the Summaries order until I'll specify otherwise

# Introduction

* 1. Olefin metathesis

Formation of new carbon-carbon bonds is one of the major objectives in modern organic chemistry. Alongside mechanisms like the Wittig reaction and palladium-catalyzed coupling, olefin metathesis is an important tool for achieving this goal.

Olefin metathesis usually involves the exchange of partners between two double bonds, though the same concept has also been applied to reactions in enynes? (between the double and triple bond), in which … is formed.

The mechanism of the catalytic cycle was proposed by Yves Chauvin in 1971. It involves initiation of the catalyst by a [2+2]-cycloaddition to create a metallacyclobutane intermediate that immediately undergoes cycloreversion to form a species with the metal atom of the catalyst bonded to the carbon atom of the first alkene. In the propagation step, another cycloaddition and cycloreversion cycle with the second alkene creates the metathesis product (figure 1). The release of small alkenes, like ethylene, can make the reaction entropically favorable.?

OM reactions are grouped by the type of the reactants and products (figure 2) – intermolecular cross-metathesis (2a) involves the exchange of double-bond partners between two separate molecules. Ring-closing metathesis (RCM; 2b) is an intramolecular reaction that can be driven by the relative stability of five- and six- membered rings?. Polymerization reactions include ring-opening metathesis polymerization (ROMP; 2c) and acyclic diene metathesis (ADMET; 2d), which competes with RCM in some cases.? A sentence about the regio- and stereo- selectivity of the reaction.

The evolution of metathesis catalysts includes two major progressions – choice of the central transition metal involved and its ligands. Early reactions included Ti?, Nb? and Ta? complexes as catalysts. Later, tungsten (W) and molybdenum complexes were introduced and enabled – especially in Mo complexes – superior catalytic activity.? However, their low functional group tolerance and sensitivity to moisture and oxygen were significant drawbacks for many reactions.? In 1992, Grubbs introduced the first ruthenium complex for olefin metathesis, exhibiting lower activity but a significant improvement in stability in oxygen- and water-containing environments and for various functional groups.?

The second factor determining the catalyst's characteristics – its ligands – has also progressed significantly. Most Ru catalysts contain the carbene ligand responsible for the initiation – usually benzylidene (?) – two anionic ligands like chloride and two neutral ligands. While in early catalysts these neutral ligands were phosphines – chosen for…

* 1. Principles of bioorthogonal chemistry

Bioorthogonal chemistry describes a set of reactions that can be used in biological contexts and include reactants or catalysts that are not commonly found in nature. Thus, their reactivity with endogenous biological molecules like proteins, sugars and nucleic acids can be limited. Other key characteristics of bioorthogonal reactions are high yields and reactions rate, water tolerance and generally small reaction partners, which minimize perturbance to the biological system.14 These requirements enable highly selective and efficient modification of molecules in biological environments.

Multiple bioorthogonal reactions have been reported, including native chemical ligation to create amide bonds in protein synthesis,? Copper-catalyzed azide-alkyne cycloaddition (CuAAC) that forms triazoles,? tetrazine ligation that forms bicyclic compounds? and several types of photoinducible reactions, in which light activates relatively stable reactants.?

Bioorthogonal reactions are often modified forms of well-known reactions that were optimized for the strict requirements of biological systems. For example, the Staudinger reaction – between a phosphine and an azide – was described in 1919 but was not useful for the creation of an amide bond in an aqueous environment because of spontaneous hydrolysis. Changing the ligands of phosphine (??) prevented this and uncovered a highly selective and biocompatible tool.20

Bioorthogonal techniques complement strategies like genetic engineering and protein tags for many applications – drug development? and delivery?, expansion of the genetic code by incorporation of unnatural amino acids?, targeted protein degradation? and cell imaging by tagging different kinds of target molecules. A striking example of the latter, for in-vivo imaging of glycans distribution, was achieved in 2008 – researchers labeled cell-surface glycans in a zebrafish cell line with an azide equivalent then reacted it with a fluorescent cyclooctyne variant (DIFO-488).15 The glycans were labeled distinctly through the zebrafish's development.

In this work, I shall summarize the recent advances in olefin metathesis in the context of bioorthogonal chemistry and focus on the techniques and catalysts used to progress from reactions in aqueous media to metathesis in living cells (in-vivo).

# Body

## Reasons to attempt in-vivo metathesis and examples of specific reactions

Although bioorthogonal chemistry enabled significant progress in research and is even used in certain industry processes,? the reactions mentioned in the section above have a limited scope of reactants and products – most additions involve azides, nitrogen heterocycles or alkynes and the formation of amide or similar heteroatom-containing bonds.? These can be useful in biological contexts, but there is still a need for reactions that create a new carbon backbone.

Olefin metathesis can be a valuable tool in this endeavor – its versatility enables synthesis of many biologic and biologically reactive molecules, such as amino acids, peptides, proteins, sugars, lipids nucleic acids and drugs. A couple of the researched and proposed usages are hereby presented.

Synthesis and modification of proteins is one of the best studied applications of bioorthogonal olefin metathesis. Not only can metathesis catalyze the formation of a protein similar to one found in nature, but through a careful choice of the reacting residues, the synthesized protein can be improved in terms of stability and ligand affinity in comparison to the "natural" form. For example, when an ethylene bridge replaces the disulfide bond in protein this can result in greater conformational rigidity and stability. A study comparing the activity and half-lives of oxytocin agonists and antagonists with these "dicarba analogues", that were synthesized through RCM, found that the replacement increases the half-life while retaining the biological activity of this peptide hormone.19

Protein degradation

Sugars

Lipids (?)

DNA (and RNA?)

Drugs – prodrug activation and drug delivery

Metathesis in-vivo can be a valuable tool in drug delivery, as the bond forming or breaking process can liberate bioactive molecules from a cage in the required tissue or microenvironment. A study of virus-like particles as carrier molecules for peptide drugs developed the use of ROMP as the uncaging process. The particles were functionalized with NHS-activated norborene, and so a ROMP reaction tha created a bond between two norborene molecules drove the disassembly of the vesicle and release of the cargo peptide.23 This generic mechanism may be used for other types of drugs and for other vesicles, as long as they can bind metathesis substrates.

* "Living factories" inside organisms
* Drug synthesis, transport and uncaging/deprotection
* Protein modification
* DNA modification
* Further examples
* Replacement of different bioorthogonal reactions (not OM)

## Challenges and requirements

The things that currently prevent us from achieving in-vivo metathesis in industry scale.

* 1. General (limitations of every OM)

There must be alkenes…

A major challenge in utilizing olefin metathesis reactions in biological systems stems from nature of their biorthogonality – unconjugated alkenes, and especially terminal ones, are the common reactant in metathesis and may not be found in the cells where the desired metathesis should occur.? Thus, in most cases the reactants should be administered with the catalyst or synthesized in-situ from a naturally occurring compound. Those olefins should be stable in the cellular environment and not cause harm to the cell.

We cannot really change temperature and pH.

Side reactions must be avoided…

Beta-hydrsomething and double bond migration…

Removing ruthenium from the final products…

* 1. Reaction-specific challenges

Two ways I can explain this:

* + the common grouping of OM reactions – RCM, CM, ROMP and ADMET, which is better and which present challenges
  + effect of specific groups in biological reactants, such as OH in sugars, steric hindrance in proteins, side reactions and reactivity of products
  1. Water-related
  2. Biology-related

The reaction must be fast…

Low substrate concentration…

Specificity

That damned GSH

Poisoning the organism - Ru is usually considered toxic and carcinogenic :(

Catalyst poisoning, decomposition, chelation and aggregation

Probably more about it in my summaries

* 1. use-case-specific (e.g. blood/cancer environment)

componentization of the reaction to the correct organ/organelle inside the cell

## Solutions (can include lessons from other biorthogonal reactions)

### Catalysts

Generally, why Ru is the best and the rest suck

* + 1. GHII (and III?) catalysts

Why carbenes are the best and phosphines suck

Short introduction to GHII, GHIII, AquaMet and Grela with comparative studies of their STABILITY, TON, TOF and selectivity in some reactions

Choosing the catalyst is one of the most important decisions when planning a synthesis, and in the case of in-vivo olefin metathesis it must fit the strict requirements of the reaction – rapid and efficient catalysis in low concentration, specificity for reactants and selectivity for products, being biologically inert and non-toxic and localization to the relevant tissues and cellular components.

Ru complexes are established to be the most stable and functional group- and water- tolerant olefin metathesis catalysts,?? and most recent research in the field of aqueous olefin metathesis involved different ruthenium compounds.? Their early versions, with phosphine ligands, were very air sensitive and could catalyze a limited range of metathesis reactions, even when equipped with cationic groups to increase solubility.4 quoted? Replacing one phosphine ligand with NHC and the other with an isopropoxy group bound to the benzylidene creates the Grubbs-Hoveyda second generation catalyst (GHII), blab la bla (figure Xa)

Despite these advantages, GHII catalysts have glaring drawbacks – the cellular toxicity of ruthenium, the poor solubility of the hydrophobic catalyst in aqueous solutions

* + 1. Charged catalysts

Article 21

Cationic and anionic and what's good about them, should compare to previous point's catalysts in same/similar table

Some downsides of neutral, hydrophobic catalysts can be resolved by attaching ionic moieties. AquaMet is a GHII catalyst in which a quaternary ammonium group is attached to the N-heterocyclic carbine and improves the solubility in water. It was successfully employed in physiological conditionsand is moderately cytotoxic, significantly impacting HeLa cells viability in concentrations above 0.2 mg/mL and not harming 1MEA cells even in greater concentrations.23

However, cationic-ligand bearing catalyst like AquaMet have drawbacks as well – they may acidify the water around the ruthenium complex, accelerating its decomposition and fail to catalyze substrates on nucleic acids because of the attraction between the cationic group and the negatively-charged phosphate backbone (12 quotes). Anionic tags may resolve this issue – cyclic alkylaminocarbene (CAAC) ligands functionalized with a sulfonate tag showed greatly improved stability in water – the AquaMet aqua species, which is formed immediately in water, decays over 2 hours whereas the anionic catalyst remains over 24 hours.11 They also managed to achieve attractive TONs (70-1520, depending on the reaction) for RCM and CM of various challenging substrates like the sugar galactopyranoside and uridine (a sentence about potential). The reactions proceeded in 70˚C and in the presence of NaCl and should therefore tested in more realistic biological conditions.

* + 1. Metalloproteins/metalloenzymes – design, synthesis and usage+examples

Article 21

Another promising technology for catalyst uptake is through a polymersome – an artificial organelle composed of a polymer and the catalyst. In a recent study, a polyethylene glycol (PEG) derivative was conjugated – either covalently or through hydrophobic interactions – to HGII catalyst to form polymersomes. These were successfully internalized by HeLa cells, localized in the lysosome and catalyzed RCM formation of umbelliferone inside the cell. The combined effect of encapsulation and localization inside an intracellular organelle both protects the cell from the cytotoxicity of free GHII catalysts and prevents decomposition of the catalyst by cellular compounds like GSH. It should be noted that the conversion rate of this reaction was quite low, perhaps due to said encapsulation isolating the catalyst from the substrate.22 Further optimization is necessary to adapt this interesting technique to other metathesis reactions and in a wider scale.

* + 1. Getting rid of the catalyst afterward
  1. Biologically relevant conditions and model reactions – choice of substrate and reaction partners

Pseudo-amino acids and how to make them

Metatheses in which one of the substrates is a peptide or a protein require the incorporation of alkene-containing amino acids, which are unnatural amino acids (UAAs). This can be achieved chemically – by modifying an existing residue – or genetically.

Common alkene containing amino acids are depicted in figure x.

Bla bla chemical modification

Genetic incorporation of UAAs exploits their similarity to natural amino acids which allows them to occupy the binding site in aminoacyl-tRNA synthetase. A study testing the incorporation of S and Se methionine analogues to E. Coli methionyl-tRNA synthetase revealed that the turnover was the highest for S-allylhomocysteine (Ahc). Ahc was also incorporated successfully to multiple proteins in-vivo while keeping their original secondary structure and function – look at notes. Cross-metathesis by GHII catalyst with allyl alcohol or the fluorescent tracer fluorescein was performed with moderate to high yields (55%-95%), depending on the protein and the reaction partner. The same UAA was also installed into the Fc region of immunoglobulin G in a human cell line and reacted with olefin-biotin, illustrating the potential use for biotin tagging (??).

The chalcogen effect

Steric optimizations

All the nice things that facilitate reactions

* 1. Modification of the environment/additional reagents

Should be careful that these reagents are chemically and biologically inert

* 1. Choice of the organism

In case we get to – a good place for lessons from other reactions

* 1. Purification and removal of the catalyst

# Discussion

1. Recommended catalyst for each use-case
2. Most- and least-fitting OM reactions
3. Challenges that still aren't answered and if I have any possible solutions
4. More ideas for applications

# Conclusion

# References