

Lewis Acid-Catalyzed Benzannulation via Unprecedented [4+2] Cycloaddition of o-Alkynyl(oxo)benzenes and Enynals with Alkvnes

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Abstract: The reaction of o-alkynyl(oxo)benzenes 1 with alkynes 2 in the presence of a catalytic amount of AuCl₃ in (CH₂Cl)₂ at 80 °C gave the [4+2] benzannulation products, naphthyl ketone derivatives 3 and 4, in high yields. When the reaction was carried out using AuBr₃ instead of AuCl₃, the reaction speed was enhanced and the chemical yield was increased. On the other hand, when the reaction was carried out in the presence of a catalytic amount of Cu(OTf)2 and 1 equiv of a Brønsted acid, such as CF2HCO2H, in (CH₂Cl)₂ at 100 °C, the decarbonylated naphthalene products 5 were obtained in high yields. Similarly, the Cu(OTf)₂-H₂O-promoted reaction of the enynals 7 with an alkyne 2 afforded the corresponding [4+2] benzannulation products, decarbonylated benzene derivatives 8, in good yields. Both AuX3- and Cu(OTf)2catalyzed benzannulations proceed most probably through the formation of the benzo[c]pyrylium ate complex 10, the Diels-Alder addition of alkynes 2 to the ate complex, and the resulting bicyclic pyrylium ion intermediate 12. The mechanistic difference between the AuX₃ and Cu(OTf)₂-HA system is discussed.

Introduction

Regio- and chemoselective construction of polysubstituted aromatic compounds has been a challenging problem in organic synthesis.¹ Although the transition metal-catalyzed [2+2+2] cyclotrimerization of alkynes is well accepted as one of the most convenient methods for the preparation of aromatic rings, a drawback of this methodology lies in the difficulty in controlling chemo- and regioselectivity.² Recently, Sato reported a new type of acetylene trimerization via titanacycles³ and Takahashi reported a new style of benzannulation through zirconacycles,⁴ although those processes are not catalytic. On the other hand, we developed the palladium-catalyzed [4+2] benzannulation between enynes and diynes,⁵ or between two enynes,⁶ which

solved a part of the problems inherent in the [2+2+2] benzannulation method. Among the methods for the preparation of arene compounds, there has been a lot of effort in the synthesis of naphthalene derivatives, which are important as bioactive agents and in structural and synthetic chemistry. Many modern methods for the synthesis of naphthalene frameworks using several transition metal catalysts, such as Pd,8 W,9 Rh,10 Ru, 11 and Ir, 12 have been reported. However, little attention has

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ARTICLES Asao et al.

Table 1. The AuX₃-Catalyzed Reaction of o-Alkynylbenzaldehydes 1 with Alkynes 2^a

$$R^{1} = R^{2}$$

entry	1	R	2	R ¹	R ²	catalyst	time	ratio ^b	yield (%) ^c
1 ^d	1a	Ph	2a	C ₃ H ₇	Н	AuCl ₃	1 d	3a:4a = 95:5	57
2	1a	Ph	2a	C_3H_7	Н	AuCl ₃	1.5 h	3a:4a = 92:8	91
3^e	1a	Ph	2a	C_3H_7	Н	AuCl ₃	3 h	3a:4a = 89:11	72
4	1a	Ph	2a	C_3H_7	Н	$AuBr_3$	1.5 h	3a:4a = 93:7	100
5^f	1a	Ph	2b	Ph	Н	$AuCl_3$	2.5 h	3b:4b = 99:<1	96
6^f	1a	Ph	2b	Ph	Н	$AuBr_3$	0.7 h	3b:4b = 99:<1	100
7	1a	Ph	2c	Me ₃ Si	Н	AuCl ₃	6 h	3c:4c = 16:84	82
8	1a	Ph	2d	CO ₂ Et	Н	AuCl ₃	3 h	3d:4d = 18:82	72
9	1a	Ph	2e	$COCH_3$	Н	AuCl ₃	3.5 h	3e:4e = <1:99	75
10	1a	Ph	2f	C_3H_7	C_3H_7	AuCl ₃	2.5 h	3f(=4f)	52
11	1a	Ph	2f	C_3H_7	C_3H_7	AuBr ₃	2.5 h	$3\mathbf{f}(=4\mathbf{f})$	70
12	1a	Ph	2g	Ph	Me ₃ Si	$AuCl_3$	2 h	3g:4g = 99: <1	92
13	1a	Ph	2 h	Ph	Me	AuCl ₃	3 h	3h:4h = 99:<1	89
14	1b	C_6H_{13}	2b	Ph	Н	AuCl ₃	1.5 h	3i:4i = 92:8	91

 $[^]a$ The reaction was performed using o-alkynylbenzaldehydes 1 (1 equiv) and alkynes 2 (3 equiv) in the presence of AuX₃ (3 mol %) in (ClCH₂)₂ at 80 °C unless otherwise noted. b Determined by 1 H NMR. c Combined isolated yield. d The reaction was carried out at 30 °C in CH₂Cl₂. e The reaction was carried out in the presence of 1 mol % of AuCl₃. ^f The reaction was carried out using 1.2 equiv of 2b.

been paid to the Lewis acid-catalyzed benzannulation, ^{7,13} while a large amount of research has been carried out for the Lewis acid-catalyzed [4+2] Diels-Alder reaction. 14 Recently, we have communicated the AuCl₃-catalyzed formal [4+2] benzannulation between o-alkynyl(oxo)benzenes 1 and alkynes, which produces naphthyl ketones in good to high yields (eq 1).¹⁵

Now, we report the detailed study on the gold-catalyzed benzannulation reaction together with an unprecedented [4+2] benzannulation between o-(alkynyl)benzaldehyde **1a** (or enynals) and alkynes, which produces the debenzoylated naphthalenes (or benzenes, respectively) in good to high yields (eqs 2 and 3). The combined use of a catalytic amount of Lewis acidic Cu(OTf)₂ and a stoichiometric amount of a Brønsted acid (HA) is a key for this novel transformation.

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Results and Discussion

(A) AuX₃-Catalyzed Benzannulation. As we previously communicated, the reaction of o-alkynyl(oxo)benzenes 1 with alkynes 2 proceeded smoothly in the presence of a catalytic amount of $AuCl_3$ to afford naphthyl ketone derivatives $\boldsymbol{3}$ and $\boldsymbol{4}$ in good to high yields (Table 1). $^{15-17}$ As shown in entries 1-3, the AuCl₃ (3 mol %)-catalyzed reaction of 1a with 2a gave a 92-95:5-8 mixture of 3a and 4a in good to high yields. The reaction progress depended on the reaction temperature and on the amount of the catalyst. We searched for a more efficient catalyst than AuCl₃ and found that AuBr₃ exhibited higher catalytic activity. The reaction of 1a with 2a in the presence of 3 mol % of AuBr₃ in 1,2-dichloroethane at 80 °C for 2.5 h gave a 93:7 mixture of **3a** and **4a** in essentially quantitative yield (entry 4). The AuBr₃-catalyzed reaction of 1a with 2b also proceeded smoothly to give 3b exclusively in a quantitative yield (entry 6). The reaction with AuBr₃ was much quicker than that with AuCl₃ (entry 6 vs 5). The regioisomers 4c-e became major products in entries 7-9, in which the R1 substituent is either an electron-withdrawing group or an Me₃Si group: the reason for this change of the regioselectivity was mentioned previously.¹⁵ Even with the symmetrically substituted internal alkyne 2f, the chemical yield of 3f was increased up to 70% yield when the reaction was catalyzed by AuBr₃ (entry 11 vs 10). The reaction of the unsymmetrically substituted internal alkynes 2g and 2h proceeded in high yields with exclusive regioselectivity (entries 12 and 13). Not only the orthophenylalkyne derivative 1a but also the ortho-n-hexyl substituted alkyne derivative **1b** underwent the [4+2] benzannulation (entry

(B) Cu(OTf)₂-Catalyzed Benzannulation. During the research on the AuCl₃-catalyzed [4+2] benzannulation between

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Table 2. The Cu(OTf)₂-Catalyzed Reaction of o-(Phenylethynyl)benzaldehyde **1a** with Alkynes **2**^a

							yield (%) ^b		
entry	2	R^1	R^2	additive	conditions	5		3	
1	2h	Ph	Me	none	80 °C, 0.5 h	5a	56	3h	22
2	2h	Ph	Me	H_2O	80 °C, 19 h	5a	52	3h	12
3	2h	Ph	Me	MeOH	80 °C, 1 h	5a	44	3h	13
4	2h	Ph	Me	HCO_2H	80 °C, 0.5 h	5a	79	3h	8
5	2h	Ph	Me	CH ₃ CO ₂ H	80 °C, 0.5 h	5a	67	3h	17
6	2h	Ph	Me	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	80 °C, 0.5 h	5a	82	3h	trace
7	2h	Ph	Me	CF ₃ CO ₂ H	80 °C, 0.5 h	5a	78	3h	trace
8^c	2h	Ph	Me	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	80 °C, 15 h	5a	6	3h	0
9	2h	Ph	Me	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5a	86	3h	0
10	2b	Ph	Н	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5b	90	3b	0
11	2i	C_4H_9	Н	CF ₃ CO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5c	72	3j	8
12	2j	Ph	Ph	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5d	85	3k	0
13	2f	C_3H_7	C_3H_7	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5e	74	3f	0
14	2k	Ph	Br	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5f	73	31	0
15	21	Ph	PhS	CF ₂ HCO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5g	60	3m	0
16	2d	CO ₂ Et	Н	CF ₃ CO ₂ H	100 °C, 0.25 h	5h	60	3d	0^d

 a The reaction was carried out using ${\bf 1a}$ (1 equiv) and ${\bf 2}$ (1.2 equiv) in the presence of Cu(OTf)₂ (5 mol %) and additives (1 equiv) in (ClCH₂)₂ unless otherwise noted. b Isolated yield. c The reaction was performed in the presence of 10 mol % of TfOH instead of Cu(OTf)₂. d ${\bf 4d}$ was obtained in 14% yield.

1a and 2, when we utilized some metal triflates instead of AuCl₃, the yield of the desired [4+2] benzannulation products 3 and 4 decreased, and trace to very small amounts of benzoic acid were detected. To clarify the origin of benzoic acid, a systematic investigation of the reaction between o-(phenylethynyl)benzal-dehyde 1a and 2 was carried out (eq 4, Table 2). The reaction

CHO +
$$R^2$$
 $\frac{cat. Cu(OTf)_2}{H-A}$ + R^1 $\frac{cat. Cu(OTf)_2}{R^1}$ + R^2 (4)

of **1a** with 1.2 equiv of **2h** ($R^1 = Ph$, $R^2 = Me$) in the presence of 5 mol % of Cu(OTf)2 in 1,2-dichloroethane at 80 °C for 30 min gave 2-methyl-3-phenyl-naphthalene 5a in 56% yield along with 1-benzoyl-3-methyl-2-phenyl-naphthalene 3h in 22% yield (entry 1). Besides the naphthalene products, benzoic acid (14%) and benzoic anhydride (12%) were also produced. This result was in marked contrast to the finding that the AuX₃-catalyzed reaction of 1 with 2 produced 3 and 4 exclusively and did not produce benzoic acid and benzoic anhydride at all. No reaction took place with other Lewis acidic copper salts, such as CuF₂, CuCl₂, CuBr₂, and Cu(OAc)₂, and the starting materials were recovered. We thought that trace amounts of water, which might exist in the reaction medium, would play an important role for the formation of benzoic acid. Accordingly, we investigated the effect of water and other protic additives. Addition of water or MeOH did not exert a dramatic influence upon the product distribution (entries 2 and 3). Interestingly, the addition of formic acid increased the chemical yield of 5a up to 79% yield and decreased the yield of **3h** (entry 4). After several trials using other Brønsted acids, we found that the reaction using CF₂-HCO₂H gave 5a in 82% yield and suppressed dramatically the formation of 3h (entries 5-7). The reaction of 1a with 2h using 10 mol % of TfOH in the absence of Cu(OTf)₂ catalyst gave only 6% of 5a even after 15 h (entry 8). This blank test clearly showed the combination between Cu(OTf)₂ catalyst and CF₂-HCO₂H was essential for the present benzannulation. The best result was obtained when the reaction was carried out at 100 °C; 5a was obtained in 86% yield (entry 9). To clarify whether 5a was formed from 3h by the cleavage of benzoyl group under the reaction conditions, 3h was treated with 10 mol % of Cu-(OTf)₂ in the presence of 1 equiv of CF₂HCO₂H at 100 °C for 15 min. However, no reaction took place, and **3h** was recovered. Even when the reaction was carried out for 1 day, 5a was not formed at all. It is clear that 5a is not produced through the C-C bond cleavage of 3h. We next examined the reaction of 1a with the other alkynes 2b, 2i, 2j, 2f, 2k, 2l, and 2d. The reaction proceeded smoothly irrespective of internal or terminal alkynes and of aromatic or aliphatic alkynes to give the corresponding benzannulation products 5b-e in good to high yields (entries 10–13). Even bromo-, phenylthio-, and ethoxycarbonyl-substituted alkynes were able to be used as alkynes to lead the corresponding functionalized naphthalenes **5f-h** in good yields (entries 14-16).

Because the naphthalene derivatives **5** were produced unexpectedly easily from **1a**, we were interested in the possibility of whether the present [4+2] benzannulation methodology would be applicable to the synthesis of polysubstituted benzenes or not. The reaction of the enynal **7a** with phenylacetylene **2b** under similar reaction conditions as shown in Table 2 (cat Cu-(OTf)₂ and HA) gave **8a** in a low yield; the use of Brønsted acids (HA) as an additive was not so effective. After many attempts, we found that the treatment of **7a** with **2b** (5 equiv) in the presence of 10 mol % of Cu(OTf)₂ and 1 equiv of H₂O in a mixture of 1,2-dichloroethane and CH₃CN (3:1) gave the corresponding benzene derivative **8a** in 71% yield as a sole product (eq 5). Similarly, the reaction of **7b** with **2b** under the same reaction conditions afforded **8b** in 50% yield (eq 6).

(C) Reaction Mechanism. A plausible mechanism for the present benzannulation is shown in Scheme 1. The coordination of the triple bond of 1 to Lewis acid (ML_n: AuX₃ or Cu(OTf)₂) enhances the electrophilicity of alkyne, and the subsequent nucleophilic attack (as shown in 9) of the carbonyl oxygen to the electron-deficient alkyne would form the ate complex 10.^{18,19} The Diels—Alder reaction of 10 with an alkyne 2 would form the intermediate 12 through 11.²⁰ When the reaction is catalyzed by AuX₃, the subsequent bond rearrangement, as shown in 14

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⁽¹⁹⁾ Iwasawa has proposed the similar intermediate in the reaction of o-ethynylphenyl ketones with alkenes in the presence of W(CO)₅ THF, see: Iwasawa, N.; Shido, M.; Kusama, H. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2001, 123, 5814–5815

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ARTICLES Asao et al.

Scheme 1

with arrows, would afford the naphthyl ketone derivatives 3 and 4 and regenerate AuX3. On the other hand, in the Cu(OTf)₂-HA system, protonolysis of the C-Cu bond of **12** by a Brønsted acid (HA) such as CF₂HCO₂H, followed by the attack of A⁻ to the carbon of RCO, would produce 13, which would undergo the retro Diels-Alder reaction shown in 13 to lead the formation of 5 and 6.21 Even in the absence of HA, the protonolysis would occur partially by trace amounts of water that exist in the media, and subsequent addition of OH to RCO would give benzoic acid 6a (R = Ph, A = OH) (eq 2). As we mentioned above, benzoic anhydride **6b** ($R = Ph, A = PhCO_2$) was also obtained in the reaction of 1a with 2h. A blank test indicated that benzoic anhydride was not formed from benzoic acid under the reaction conditions. This result indicates that benzoic acid 6a generated in situ may behave also as a HA to give 5 and 6b. If the protonolysis of the C-Cu bond does not proceed efficiently, the naphthyl ketone derivatives 3 and 4 are produced directly from 12 through the bond rearrangement similar to that in the case of the AuX3-catalyzed reaction. To clarify whether the debenzoylated naphthalene products 5 are obtained also in the AuX₃-HA system, we examined the reaction of 1a with 2h in the presence of 5 mol % of AuBr₃ and 1 equiv of CF₂HCO₂H. As we expected, **5a** was obtained in 32% yield along with 21% of 3h. During the reaction, the mirror of Au was observed in the reaction vessel due to the decomposition of AuBr₃, and the starting material 1a was recovered in 14% yield. Accordingly, the protonolysis of the C-M bond of 12 would be more efficient in the case of the Cu-catalyzed reaction, as compared to the Au-catalyzed reaction.

Another intriguing point of the Cu(OTf)₂-benzannulation is seemingly facile C-C bond cleavage of the triple bond of 1a. Although several reactions are known for single and double bond cleavage,²² only a few transformations for triple bond are known, including alkyne-ligand scission on metal complexes,23 oxidative cleavage,²⁴ and the transition metal-catalyzed alkyne methathesis.²⁵ Recently, Jun and co-workers developed the Rhcatalyzed hydroiminoacylation, which resulted in the cleavage of the triple bond, although the chelation-assistance was required.²⁶ We also recently reported the triple bond cleavage of diynes through the hydroamination with transition metal catalysts.²⁷ On the other hand, to the best of our knowledge,

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the present reaction is the first example of the Lewis acidcatalyzed cleavage of a triple bond.

Conclusion

We are now in a position to synthesize functionalized multisubstituted naphthalene derivatives in good to high yields through the Lewis acid-catalyzed [4+2] benzannulation between o-alkynyl(oxo)benzenes and alkynes. Just by changing the catalyst system, we obtained either the naphthyl ketone derivatives 3 and 4 or the decarbonylated naphthalenes 5. The Lewis acid-catalyzed [4+2] benzannulation can be extended to enynals, which provides a new method for the synthesis of substituted benzenes.

Experimental Section

AuBr₃-Catalyzed Benzannulation. The preparation of **3b** is representative. To AuBr₃ (6.5 mg, 3 mol %) was added a mixture of **1a** (103 mg, 0.5 mmol) and **2b** (66 μ L, 0.6 mmol) in (ClCH₂)₂ (1.5 mL) at room temperature under Ar atmosphere. The resulting homogeneous

solution was stirred at 80 °C for 1 h and then cooled to room temperature. The reaction mixture was transferred to a silica gel column, and the product was isolated using ether as eluent; **3b** was obtained as a yellow solid (154 mg, 0.5 mmol) in 100% yield.

Cu(OTf)₂-Catalyzed Benzannulation. The preparation of **5a** is representative. To a mixture of **1a** (103 mg, 0.5 mmol) and Cu(OTf)₂ (9.0 mg, 5 mol %) in 1,2-dichloroethane (2 mL) were added **2h** (75 μ L, 0.6 mmol) and CF₂HCO₂H (31 μ L, 0.5 mmol) successively at room temperature under Ar atmosphere. The resulting mixture was stirred at 100 °C for 15 min and then cooled to room temperature. A saturated aqueous solution of NaHCO₃ was added, and the mixture was extracted with ether three times. The combined extracts were washed with brine, dried (MgSO₄), and evaporated to leave the crude product, which was purified by silica gel column chromatography using hexane as an eluent to give **5a** (93.7 mg, 0.43 mmol) in 86% yield.

Supporting Information Available: Spectroscopic and analytical data for **5a-h** and **8a-b** (PDF). This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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