Rh-Catalyzed Tandem C-H Allylation and Oxidative Cyclization of Acetanilides: A New Entry to Indoles

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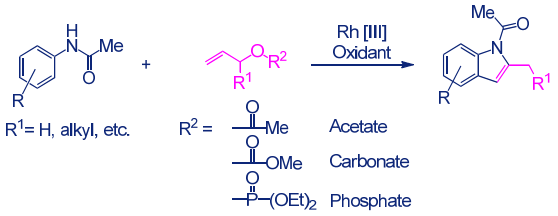
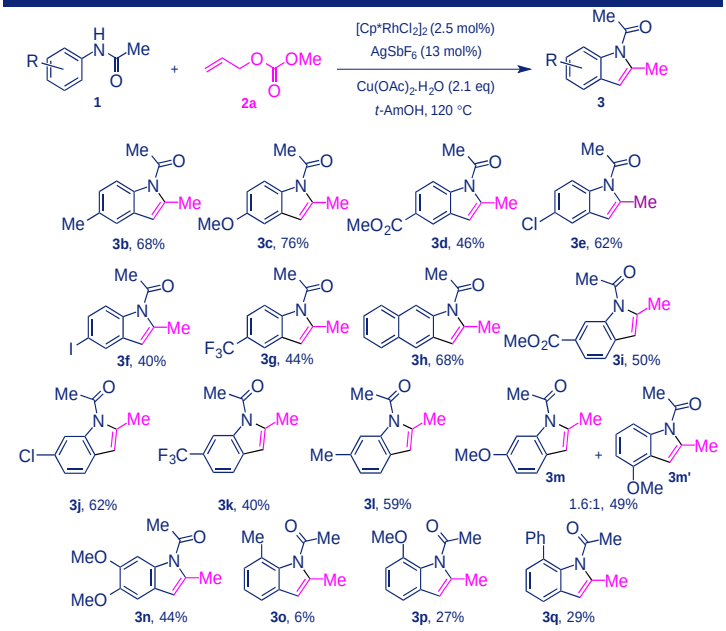
Objective

Transition metal-catalyzed C-H bond functionalization of organic molecules has been recognized as a powerful atom-economy strategy for the synthesis of a variety of heterocycles.[1] The preparation of 2,3-disubstituted indoles by Pd-, Ru- and Rh-catalyzed cyclization of aniline derivatives with *internal* alkynes has been intensively studied over the last few years.[2]

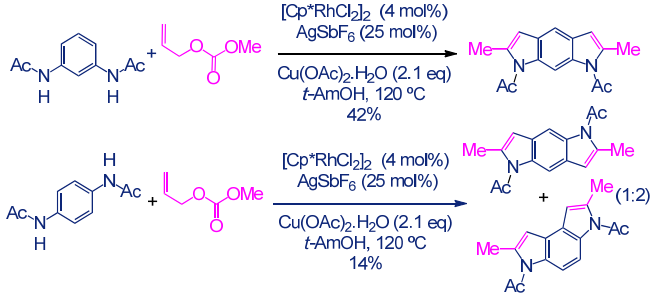
Herein, we report a new synthesis of 2-substituted indoles[3] by tandem Rh-catalyzed cyclization of acetanilides with allylic derivatives, thus showing the equivalency of these coupling partners with *terminal* alkynes.



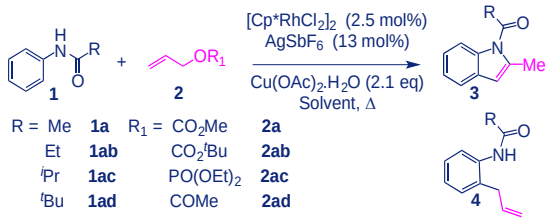
2-Methylindoles 3 by Tandem Rh-Catalyzed Cyclization of Substituted Acetanilides



bis-Indoles by Tandem Rh-Catalyzed Cyclization of *bis*-Acetanilides



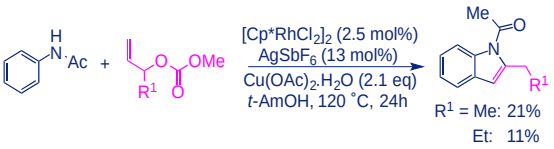
Optimization



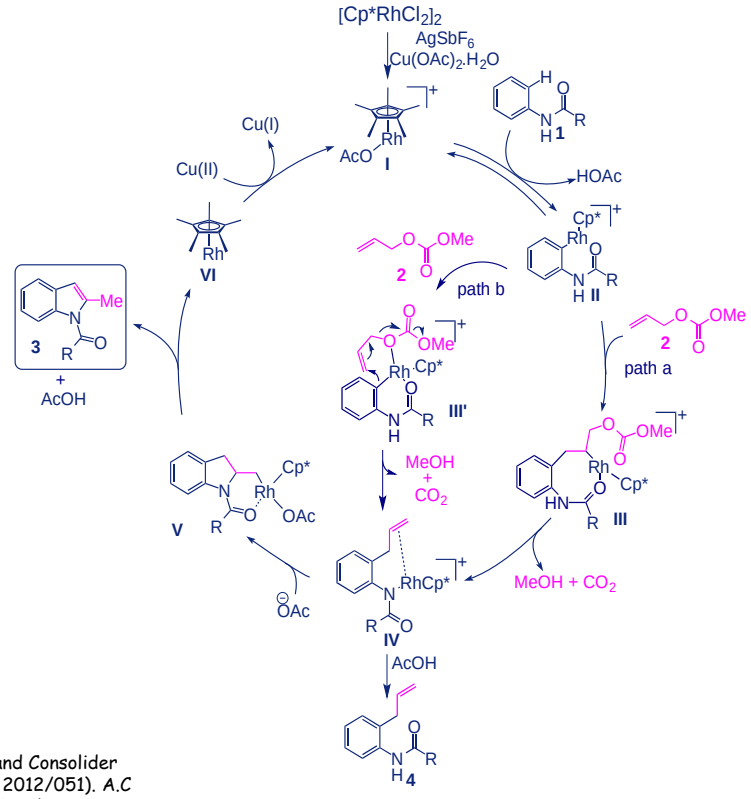
Entry	Substrate	Allylic derivative	Solvent	T/°C	Time	Yield (%)[a]
1	**1a**	**2a**	DCE	120	20 h	66
2	**1a**	**2a**	*t*-BuOH	130	24 h	75
3	**1a**	**2a**	*t*-AmOH	120	24 h	82
4[b]	**1a**	**2a**	*t*-AmOH	120	15 h	75
5	**1a**	**2ab**	*t*-AmOH	120	24 h	47
6	**1a**	**2ac**	*t*-AmOH	120	24 h	49
7	**1a**	**2ad**	*t*-AmOH	120	24 h	68
8	**1ab**	**2a**	*t*-AmOH	120	24 h	63
9	**1ac**	**2a**	*t*-AmOH	120	24 h	38
10	**1ad**	**2a**	*t*-AmOH	120	24 h	(59)[c]

[a] *Conditions*: **1a** (0.37 mmol), **2a** (0.41 mmol), [**1a**] = 0.074 M. Isolated yields of **3**. [b] *Conditions*: [Cp*Rh(CH3CN)3]SbF6 (5 mol%). [c] *o*-allylacetanilide **4** was obtained.

2-Alkyl Indoles by Tandem Rh-Catalyzed Cyclization of Acetanilide with Branched Allylic Carbonates



Mechanistic Proposal



Acknowledgement: This work was supported by MICINN [projects CTQ2011-28258 and Consolider Ingenio 2010 (CSD2007-00006)] and Xunta de Galicia (projects CN2011/054 and EM 2012/051). A.C thanks Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación for a predoctoral fellowship (BES 2009-024194).

References:

[1] (a) Yamaguchi, J.; Yamaguchi, A. D.; Itami, K. *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2012**, *51*, 8960-9009. (b) Kuhl, N.; Hopkinson. M. N.; Wencel-Delord J.; Glorius, F. *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2012**, *51*,, 10236-10254.
[2] [Pd]: (a) Wurtz, S.; Rakshit, S.; Neumann, J. J.; Droge, T.; Glorius, F. *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2008**, *47*, 7230-7233. [Ru]: (b) Ackermann, L.; Lygin, A. V. *Org. Lett.* **2012**, *14*, 764-767. [Rh]: (c) Stuart, D. R.; Alsabeh, P.; Kuhn, M.; Fagnou, K. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2010**, *132*, 18326-18339.
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