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Supporting Information

Copper-Catalyzed Oxidative Multicomponent Reaction: Synthesis of

Imidazo Fused Heterocycles with Molecular Oxygen

Xianwei Li,*[†] Tianzhang Wang,[†] Yu-Jing Lu,*[†] Shaomin Ji,[†] Yanping Huo,[†] Bifu Liu*[‡] [†]School of Chemical Engineering and Light Industry, Guangdong University of Technology, Guangzhou 510006, China.

[‡]School of Chemistry and Material Engineering, Huizhou University, Huizhou 516007, China. Email: <u>xwli@gdut.edu.cn; luyj@gdut.edu.cn; liubf@hzu.edu.cn</u>

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1. General methods

¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR data were obtained on AVANCE III Bruker 400 MHz nuclear resonance spectrometers unless otherwise noted. Chemical shifts (in ppm) were referenced to tetramethylsilane (TMS) ($\delta = 0.00$ ppm) in CDCl₃ or dimethyl sulfoxide ($\delta = 2.50$ ppm) in DMSO-d₆ as an internal standard. The data of ¹H NMR was reported as follows: chemical shift, multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, m = multiplet and br = broad), coupling constant (*J* values) in Hz and integration. ¹³C NMR spectra were obtained by the same NMR spectrometers and were calibrated with CDCl₃ ($\delta = 77.16$ ppm) or DMSO-d₆ ($\delta = 39.50$ ppm). The data of HRMS was carried out on a high-resolution mass spectrometer (LCMS-IT-TOF).

2. Optimization of the reaction conditions

Table SI1. Optimization of the reaction conditions of MCRs to deliver imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine.

Ph—==	+ Ph Br	+	Cu(OTf) ₂ (10 mol%), O ₂ (1 at	
1a	2a	N NH ₂ 3a	TEMPO (30 mol%) toluene, 100 ºC, 12 h	O 4a
Entry	Variation of optimal conditions		Yield ^b (%)	
1	None			92 (90)
2	HOTf instead of Cu(OTf) ₂			-
3	NiCl ₂ instead of Cu(OTf) ₂			trace
4	AgOAc instead of TEMPO			< 10
5	addition of K ₂ CO ₃			42
6	bpy			-
7	1,10-phen			19
8	DABCO			-
9	1,4-dioxane			trace
10	CH ₃ CN			23
11	DMF			21
12	DMSO			25
13	1: 2 : 3 = 1.0:1.5:2.0			72
14		1: 2 : 3	= 1.0:1.0:1.2	39

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: catalyst (10 mol%), additive (30 mol%), solvent (1 mL) at the given temperature for 12 h. ^{*b*} Yields were determined by GC-MS with *n*-dodecane as the internal standard. Yield in the parentheses is the isolated yield.

3. Mechanistic studies

1) Control experiments:

To gain some insight into this transformation, we first conduct control experiment (eq. 1) with the standard condition under N_2 atmosphere, and no desired product **4a** was isolated; while the addition of 2 equivalent of TEMPO also led to no desired product **4a** was detected.



To elucidate the origin of the oxygen atom of the product 4a, we also performed isotopic labeled experiment with ${}^{18}O_2$, indeed, the ${}^{18}O$ labeled product 4a was confirmed by HRMS.



2) Intermediate verification experiments via stepwise reactions

To further investigate the reaction sequence of this multicomponent reaction, we performed two component reactions, and found that benzylic bromide 2a could react with 2-amino pyridine 3a to give $S_N 2$ product 8 in 72% yield under standard condition (eq. 3). Moreover, with the obtained $S_N 2$ product 8 and terminal alkyne 1a under the standard reaction condition, the desired product 4a was isolated in good yield (eq. 4). These results suggest that this multicomponent reaction might proceed via nucleophilic substitution reaction of 2a and 3a, leading to $S_N 2$ product 8 as the intermediate, which would participate the further transformation with terminal alkyne 1a, and finally led to the desired product 4a.



In connection with precedent literature, we proposed that 2-oxo-2phenylacetaldehyde **1a'** might be generated in situ by selective aerobic oxidation of terminal alkyne **1a**. Control experiment by subjecting 2-oxo-2-phenylacetaldehyde **1a'** and $S_N 2$ product **8** into the standard condition was conducted, and the result was in consistent with the transformation listed in (eq. 5).



3) Proposed reaction pathway

Pathway A and B:



Scheme SI-1. Pathway A and B.

Pathway A and **B** initiated with oxidative coupling of **1a** and **3a** under Cu(II)catalyzed oxidative condition, delivering **9** as the key intermediate. As for Pathway **A**, further substitution reaction of **9** with benzylic bromide **2a** with the assistance of copper salt and base, affording **11**, which underwent further oxidation of benzylic C-H bond to generate the desired IP product 4a.

Alternatively, as for pathway B, benzylic bromide 2a was oxidized to the corresponding benzaldehyde 10, which underwent substitution of key intermediate 9, generating the corresponding alcohol 12. Further oxidation of 12 took place under copper catalyst and oxidant, delivering 4a product. Cu(OTf)₂ (10 mol%), O₂ (1 atm) Li₂CO₃ (30 mol%), TEMPO (30 mol%) Br or Ph (eq. 6) 9 2a 10 4a, N.P.

However, when pre-synthesized intermediate **9** and benzylic bromide **2a** or benzaldehyde **10** were subjected to the standard conditions, respectively, no desired IP product **4a** was obtained. Thus, pathway **A** and pathway **B** were ruled out for this transformation (eq. 6).

Pathway C:



Scheme SI-2. Pathway A and B.

According to the above control experiments, we proposed a possible mechanism as **Pathway C.** Initially, S_N^2 reaction of benzylic bromide with 2-amino pyridine **3a** took place, delivering intermediate **8**; further CDC (cross dehydrogenative coupling) reaction of **8** with terminal alkyne **2a** under Cu(II)-catalyzed oxidative conditions led to intermediate **A**. Coordination of **A** with Cu(II) catalyst to form complex **B**. Subsequent SET process occurs with molecular oxygen to deliver peroxy-Cu(III) intermediate **C**, followed by a sequence of intramolecular amino-cuperation of alkynes and oxygenative carbonylation, delivering acylated heterocycle **4a**.

4. NMR Spectrum



Phenyl(2-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone (4a)



Phenyl(2-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone (4b)

¹⁹F spectrum



HRMS

Mass Analysis Report





(2-Bromophenyl)(2-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone (4c)

HRMS









HRMS





Ethyl 4-(3-(4-bromobenzoyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-2-yl)benzoate (4e)

Mass Analysis Report



(4-Bromophenyl)(2-(naphthalen-2-yl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone (4f)









(4-Bromophenyl)(2-(5-methylfuran-2-yl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone

HRMS



(4-Bromophenyl)(2-(thiophen-2-yl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone (4h)





HRMS





(2-(4-Bromophenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(3-chlorophenyl)methanone (4i)



(4-Methoxyphenyl)(2-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone (4j)



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6-Chloro-2-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (4k)





(6-Chloro-2-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(2,4-dichlorophenyl)methanone (4l)







(6-Chloro-2-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-



yl)(phenyl)methanone (4m)

¹⁹F spectrum



HRMS

Mass Analysis Report



(4-Chloro-2-(3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-



yl)(phenyl)methanone (4n)

¹⁹F spectrum



HRMS

Mass Analysis Report







(6-Chloro-2-(4-methoxyphenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone

Mass Analysis Report



(6-Chloro-2-(2-methoxyphenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (4p)





HRMS

Mass Analysis Report







(2-(3-Bromophenyl)-6-chloroimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (4q)

SI-31

90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0

110 f1 (ppm)

190

170

150

130



(2-(3-Bromophenyl)-8-chloroimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (4r)









(8-Bromo-2-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (4s)

HRMS



(6-Bromo-2-(4-nitrophenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (4t)









(6-Bromo-2-(4-chlorophenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(3chlorophenyl)methanone (4u)



(6-Bromo-2-(3-methoxyphenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)(2,4-

dichlorophenyl)methanone (4v)





Ethyl 3-(4-bromobenzoyl)-2-(thiophen-2-yl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine-5-carboxylate

(4w)



SI-39



HRMS

Mass Analysis Report





(*E*)-Phenyl(2-styrylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)methanone (4x)





1-(2-Phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)pentan-1-one(4y)









1-(2-Phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridin-3-yl)hexan-1-one (4z)

Mass Analysis Report



Phenyl (1,2,4-triphenyl-1*H*-imidazol-5-yl)methanone (6a)





(4-(4-Methoxyphenyl)-1,2-diphenyl-1*H*-imidazol-5-yl)(phenyl)methanone (6b)











Ethyl 4-(5-(4-bromobenzoyl)-1,2-diphenyl-1*H*-imidazol-4-yl)benzoate (6c)

Mass Analysis Report



(4-Bromophenyl)(4-(naphthalen-2-yl)-1,2-diphenyl-1*H*-imidazol-5-yl)methanone

(6d)





(4-Bromophenyl)(4-(5-methylfuran-2-yl)-1,2-diphenyl-1*H*-imidazol-5-yl)methanone (6e)









Ethyl 4-(5-benzoyl-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2-phenyl-1*H*-imidazol-4-yl) benzoate (6f)



HRMS



(4-Bromophenyl)(1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-4-(naphthalen-2-yl)-2-phenyl-1*H*imidazol-5-yl)methanone (6g)





HRMS

Mass Analysis Report





SI-54

(4-Bromophenyl)(1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2-phenyl-4-(thiophen-2-yl)-1*H*-imidazol-5-yl)methanone (6h)





(1-(4-Chlorophenyl)-2,4-diphenyl-1*H*-imidazol-5-yl)(phenyl)methanone (6i)

---0.000 7.595 7.574 7.375 7.375 7.375 7.359 7.359 5.941 5.934 -2.033 8.131 8.113 8.109 -24000 -22000 20000 18000 16000 14000 12000 10000 -8000 -6000 4000 -2000 -0 1.00-2.00-3.00 -2000 5.0 f1 (ppm) 10.0 9.0 8.0 7.0 6.0 4.0 3.0 2.0 1.0 0.0







Ethyl 4-(5-(4-bromobenzoyl)-1-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)benzoate

(6k)





HRMS





(2-(4-methoxyphenyl)benzo[d]imidazo[2,1-b]thiazol-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (7a)



(6-(4-Methoxyphenyl)imidazo[2,1-b]thiazol-5-yl)(phenyl)methanone (7b)





HRMS

Mass Analysis Report



8.051 8.047 8.034 8.034 7.781 7.781 7.7637 7.647 7.647 7.628 7.7.628 7.7.408 7.7.408 7.7.408 7.7.408 6.995 6.995 6.995 6.995 -3.873 -55000 -50000 45000 40000 -35000 -30000 -25000 20000 -15000 10000 -5000 -0 2.00 2.00 3.01 5.00 2.00 2.00 2.00 3.00--5000 9.0 7.0 5.0 f1 (ppm) 4.0 3.0 2.0 0.0 10.0 8.0 6.0 1.0 -163.38 143.87 135.03 131.03 131.03 130.75 130.25 130.25 130.25 130.25 121.84 113.79 -188.64 -9000 -55.41 77.32 -77.00 76.68 8000 7000 -6000 0 -5000 4000 -3000 -2000 -1000 -0 210 170 150 110 f1 (ppm) 190 130 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0

(6-Chloro-2-(4-methoxyphenyl)imidazo[1,2-b]pyridazin-3-yl)(phenyl)methanone (7c)



(5-Chloro-2-(4-methoxyphenyl)imidazo[1,2-c]pyrimidin-3yl)(phenyl)methanone (7d)





