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# Supporting Information

### Palladium-catalyzed dual C-H activation for the synthesis of

# indolo[1,2-f]phenanthridines

Wenguang Li,\*,<sup>a,1</sup> Wentao Li,<sup>a,1</sup> Xinyuan Hu,<sup>a</sup> Yongqi Yu, <sup>a</sup> Man Cao,<sup>a</sup> Heyun Sheng,<sup>a</sup> Xu Zhang,<sup>a</sup> Jing Tao,\*,<sup>b</sup> and Ting Li\*,<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Nanyang Normal University, Henan 473061, China

<sup>b</sup> Hubei Huayi Boarding School, Hubei 430200, China

<sup>1</sup> These authors contributed equally to this work.

*E-mail: nanyanglwg@126.com; 56260291@qq.com; chemlt2015@nynu.edu.cn.* 

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#### 1) General Information

<sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker ARX400 spectrometer (FT, 400 MHz for <sup>1</sup>H; 100 MHz for <sup>13</sup>C) at room temperature, unless otherwise noted. Chemical shifts were reported in ppm on the scale relative to CDCl<sub>3</sub> ( $\delta$  = 7.26 for <sup>1</sup>H-NMR,  $\delta$  = 77.00 for <sup>13</sup>C-NMR) or DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub> ( $\delta$  = 2.50 for <sup>1</sup>H-NMR,  $\delta$  = 39.60 for <sup>13</sup>C-NMR) as an internal reference. Multiplicities are reported using the following abbreviations: s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, q = quartet, m = multiplet. HPLC/Q-TOF-MS analysis was performed with an Agilent 1290 LC systemcoupled with a 6530Q-TOF/MS accurate-mass spectrometer (Agilent Technologies, USA). The mass spectrometry was performed in the positive electrospray ionization (ESI+) mode. Reactions were monitored by thin-layer chromatography Column chromatography (petroleum ether/ethyl acetate) was performed on silica gel (200-300 mesh). Unless otherwise noted, all starting materials were commercially available and were used without further purification.

#### 2) Synthesis of starting materials

#### a) General procedure for the Synthesis of 1a-1m, 1q-1u.<sup>1</sup>



CuI (0.5 mmol, 95.00 mg) and benzotriazole (1.0 mmol, 0.12 g) ligand were added to a 50 mL round bottom flask containing the 1,2-diiodobenzene (5.0 mmol, 1.65 g), indole (5.5 mmol, 0.64 g), and  $K_3PO_4$  (10.0 mmol, 2.12 g) in 20.0 mL of DMSO. The flask was sealed with a cap containing a PTFE septum. The mixture was heated at 120 °C until the 1,2-diiodobenzene were consumed, as determined by TLC. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature, diluted with dichloromethane and water, filtered on diatomite, and extracted with dichloromethane (10 mL\*3). The separated aqueous phase was combined and extracted with dichloromethane (5 mL\*3). The organic phase was combined and washed with saline (10 mL\*3) and dried with  $Na_2SO_4$ . The solvent was removed in vacuo and the crude residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel using a mixture of n-hexane and dichloromethane (60: 1, V/V) as eluent.

b) General procedure for the Synthesis of 1n, 1p.<sup>1</sup>

$$R \xrightarrow{II} NH + \prod_{I} F \xrightarrow{NaH} DMAC, 150 °C$$

In a dried Schlenk tube, indole (5.0 mmol) and sodium hydride (10.0 mmol) were added at room temperature. Then a solution of 1-fluoro-2-iodo-4-methylbenzene (10.0 mmol) dissolved in 20 mL DMAC was introduced into the reaction mixture by a syringe. The resulting mixture was continually stirred at 150 °C in oil bath for 12 hours and indole was almost completely consumed determined by TLC analysis. The mixture was filtered through diatomaceous earth, saturated NH<sub>4</sub>Cl was added to the mixture and extracted with ethyl acetate. The combined organic phases were dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. The solvent was removed in vacuo and the crude residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel using a mixture of n-hexane and dichloromethane (60: 1, V/V) as eluent.

#### c) Procedure for the Synthesis of 10.<sup>1</sup>



In a sealed tube, indoles (3.0 mmol), 4-chloro-1-fluoro-2-iodobenzene (3.3 mmol), *t*-BuOK (4.5mmol, 504.9 mg) and DMF (10.0 mL) were stirred at 160 °C (oil bath) under N<sub>2</sub>. After the reaction was completed as monitored by thin-layer chromatography, the reaction mixture was then quenched by water, and the water layers were extracted with ethyl acetate. The combined organic layers were washed with brine, dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. After removal of the EA, the residue was purified by chromatography on silica gel to afford **10**.

#### 3) Typical Experimental Procedures

(a) Synthesis of indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3a) from 1-(2-iodophenyl)-1*H*-indole and iodobenzene





The stirred mixture of 1-(2-iodophenyl)-1*H*-indole (53.4 mg, 0.2 mmol, 1.0 equiv), iodobenzene (81.6 mg, 0.4 mmol 2.0 equiv),  $Pd(OAc)_2$  (4.5 mg, 0.02 mmol, 10 mol%), Xantphos (23.1 mg, 0.04 mmol, 20 mol%),  $Na_2CO_3$  (42.4 mg, 0.4 mmol, 2.0 equiv), and KOAc (58.8 mg, 0.6 mmol, 3.0 equiv) in DMSO (2 mL), place in a preheated oil bath at 130 °C for 12 h. After the completion of the reaction (monitored by TLC), the reaction mixture was washed by saturated NH<sub>4</sub>Cl solution and then evaporated under reduced pressure, the crude product was purified by column chromatography to provide the desired product **3a** (42 mg, 78%).

(b) Synthesis of indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3a) from 1-(2-bromophenyl)-1*H*-indole and iodobenzene



Scheme 8

The stirred mixture of 1-(2-bromophenyl)-1*H*-indole (54.0 mg, 0.2 mmol, 1.0 equiv), iodobenzene (81.6 mg, 0.4 mmol 2.0 equiv), Pd(OAc)<sub>2</sub> (4.5 mg, 0.02 mmol, 10 mol%), Xantphos (23.1 mg, 0.04 mmol, 20 mol%), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (42.4 mg, 0.4 mmol,

2.0 equiv), and KOAc (58.8 mg, 0.6 mmol, 3.0 equiv) in DMSO (2 mL), place in a preheated oil bath at 130 °C for 12 h. After the completion of the reaction (monitored by TLC), the reaction mixture was washed by saturated NH<sub>4</sub>Cl solution and then evaporated under reduced pressure, the crude product was purified by column chromatography to provide the desired product **3a** (30 mg, 56%).

(c) Synthesis of indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3a) from 1-(2-iodophenyl)-1*H*-indole and bromobenzene



Scheme 9

The stirred mixture of 1-(2-iodophenyl)-1*H*-indole (53.4 mg, 0.2 mmol, 1.0 equiv), bromobenzene (62.4 mg, 0.4 mmol 2.0 equiv),  $Pd(OAc)_2$  (4.5 mg, 0.02 mmol, 10 mol%), Xantphos (23.1 mg, 0.04 mmol, 20 mol%),  $Na_2CO_3$  (42.4 mg, 0.4 mmol, 2.0 equiv), and KOAc (58.8 mg, 0.6 mmol, 3.0 equiv) in DMSO (2 mL), place in a preheated oil bath at 130 °C for 12 h. After the completion of the reaction (monitored by TLC), the reaction mixture was washed by saturated NH<sub>4</sub>Cl solution and then evaporated under reduced pressure, the crude product was purified by column chromatography to provide the desired product **3a** (25 mg, 47%).

#### 4) Larger-Scale Experiment



Scheme 10

The stirred mixture of 1-(2-iodophenyl)-1*H*-indole (1335 mg, 5.0 mmol, 1.0 equiv), iodobenzene (2040 mg, 10.0 mmol 2.0 equiv),  $Pd(OAc)_2$  (112.5 mg, 0.5 mmol, 10 mol%), Xantphos (577.5 mg, 1.0 mmol, 20 mol%),  $Na_2CO_3$  (1060 mg, 10.0 mmol, 2.0 equiv), and KOAc (1470 mg, 15.0 mmol, 3.0 equiv) in DMSO (50 mL), place in a preheated oil bath at 130 °C for 12 h. After the completion of the reaction (monitored by TLC), the reaction mixture was washed by saturated  $NH_4Cl$  solution and then evaporated under reduced pressure, the crude product was purified by column chromatography to provide the desired product **3a**.

#### 5) Characterization Data



indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3a): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a white solid, isolated yield 78% (42 mg). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.50 (d, J = 8.26 Hz, 1H), 8.37 (d, J = 7.39 Hz, 1H), 8.26 (d, J = 7.82 Hz, 1H), 8.16 (d, J = 4.34 Hz, 1H), 8.09 (d, J = 4.34 Hz, 1H), 7.86 (d, J = 6.52 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (t, J = 7.39 Hz, 1H), 7.47-7.39 (m, 4H), 7.31 (t, J = 7.39 Hz, 1H), 7.23 (s, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  135.9, 135.1, 133.8, 130.3, 128.6, 128.0, 127.7, 126.7, 126.0, 124.0, 123.9, 122.9, 122.3, 122.0, 121.9, 121.7, 121.0, 116.2, 114.2, 96.1. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**14-methylindolo**[1,2-*f*]**phenanthridine** (3b): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green

solid, m.p. 131-132 °C, isolated yield 84% (47 mg). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$ 8.49 (dd, J = 8.44, 0.79 Hz, 1H), 8.37-8.32 (m, 2H), 8.28 (dd, J = 9.49, 1.41 Hz, 1H), 8.26-8.24 (m, 1H), 7.86-7.84 (m, 1H), 7.56-7.50 (m, 2H), 7.47 (td, J = 8.08, 1.58 Hz, 1H), 7.44-7.36 (m, 2H), 7.31 (td, J = 8.05, 1.09 Hz, 1H), 2.82 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  136.1, 132.6, 131.4, 130.2, 128.7, 128.1, 127.9, 127.7, 126.9, 125.2, 123.9, 122.8, 122.4, 122.3, 122.1, 121.2, 118.8, 116.3, 114.0, 107.0, 12.0. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**1-(indolo[1,2-***f***]phenanthridin-14-yl)ethan-1-one (3c)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=10:1) as a pale green solid, m.p. 109-111 °C, isolated yield 73% (45 mg). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.62 (d, J = 8.54 Hz, 1H), 8.43-8.38 (m, 2H), 8.36-8.34 (m, 1H), 8.24 (dd, J = 7.97, 0.95 Hz, 1H), 8.16-8.12 (m, 1H), 7.67-7.61 (m, 2H), 7.55 (td, J = 8.16, 1.33 Hz, 1H), 7.49-7.43 (m, 3H), 2.78 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  199.4, 135.8, 134.7, 133.1, 129.3, 129.2, 128.8, 128.7, 128.4, 128.0, 124.8, 124.2, 123.4, 123.3, 122.7, 122.5, 120.8, 114.4, 114.2, 32.1. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**13-methylindolo**[**1,2-***f*]**phenanthridine** (**3d**): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, m.p. 192-193 °C, isolated yield 88% (49 mg). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.55-8.53 (m, 1H), 8.31 (dd, J = 8.03, 1.24 Hz, 1H), 8.24-8.20 (m, 2H), 8.17-8.15 (m, 1H), 7.60-7.55 (m, 1H), 7.52-7.46 (m, 2H), 7.37-7.29 (m, 2H), 7.17 (d, J = 7.12 Hz, 1H), 2.72 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 136.0, 134.7, 133.6, 130.2,

130.1, 128.7, 128.1, 127.6, 126.8, 126.2, 124.1, 123.9, 123.0, 122.4, 122.1, 122.1, 121.9, 116.4, 111.9, 94.6, 19.0. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**13-chloroindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine (3e)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 68% (41 mg), m.p. 173-174 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.47 (d, *J* = 8.37 Hz, 1H), 8.34-8.32 (m, 1H), 8.26 (d, *J* = 8.37 Hz, 1H), 8.22 (dd, *J* = 6.14, 3.35 Hz, 1H), 8.20-8.15 (m, 1H), 7.60-7.56 (m, 1H), 7.54-7.50 (m, 1H), 7.40-7.35 (m, 3H), 7.28 (t, *J* = 8.37 Hz, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  135.8, 135.6, 134.4, 129.1, 128.8, 128.4, 128.3, 126.9, 126.1, 125.7, 124.4, 124.1, 123.6, 122.4, 122.3, 121.5, 116.4, 112.7, 94.6. HRMS (ESI) m/z (M+H)<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>13</sub>ClN<sup>+</sup> 302.0731, found 302.0733.



**12-methylindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine (3f)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, m.p. 184-185 °C, isolated yield 86% (48 mg). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.49 (d, *J* = 8.30 Hz, 1H), 8.30 (dd, *J* = 7.99, 0.93 Hz, 1H), 8.24 (d, *J* = 8.74 Hz, 1H), 8.22-8.19 (m, 1H), 8.13-8.09 (m, 1H), 7.61 (s, 1H), 7.59-7.55 (m, 1H), 7.50-7.45 (m, 2H), 7.35-7.31 (m, 1H), 7.21 (dd, *J* = 8.64, 1.34 Hz, 1H), 7.17 (s, 1H), 2.55 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  136.0, 135.2, 132.2, 131.1, 130.6, 128.7, 128.1, 127.6, 126.8, 126.2, 124.1, 123.9, 123.6, 122.8, 122.3, 121.9, 120.7, 116.1, 113.9, 95.7, 21.4. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**12-methoxyindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine** (**3g**): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=10:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 90% (53 mg), mp: 173-174 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.46 (d, J = 8.34 Hz, 1H), 8.32 (d, J = 7.82 Hz, 1H), 8.25 (d, J = 9.12 Hz, 1H), 8.24-8.21 (m, 1H), 8.12-8.10 (m, 1H), 7.59-7.55 (m, 1H), 7.51-7.46 (m, 2H), 7.34 (t, J = 7.69 Hz, 1H), 7.25 (d, J = 2.48 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (s, 1H), 7.02 (dd, J = 9.12, 2.48 Hz, 1H), 3.94 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  155.1, 135.8, 135.8, 131.3, 129.0, 128.7, 128.1, 127.7, 126.7, 126.0, 124.1, 124.0, 122.8, 122.4, 121.8, 115.9, 115.0, 111.9, 102.1, 95.8, 55.6. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**12-(benzyloxy)indolo[1,2-***f***]phenanthridine (3h)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=5:1) as a brown solid, isolated yield 87% (65 mg), mp: 175-176 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.45 (d, *J* = 8.26 Hz, 1H), 8.30 (d, *J* = 7.77 Hz, 1H), 8.25 (d, *J* = 9.06 Hz, 1H), 8.23-8.20 (m, 1H), 8.10-8.08 (m, 1H), 7.58-7.55 (m, 2H), 7.53 (s, 1H), 7.48 (t, *J* = 4.21 Hz, 2H), 7.43 (t, *J* = 7.12 Hz, 2H), 7.38-7.32 (m, 3H), 7.16 (s, 1H), 7.10 (dd, *J* = 9.06, 2.27 Hz, 1H), 5.19 (s, 2H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  154.3, 137.4, 135.8, 135.8, 131.3, 129.2, 128.7, 128.6, 128.1, 127.9, 127.7, 127.6, 126.7, 125.9, 124.1, 124.0, 122.8, 122.4, 121.8, 115.9, 115.0, 112.5, 103.6, 95.9, 70.5. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



ethyl indolo[1,2-f]phenanthridine-12-carboxylate (3i): Purification by column

chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=5:1) as a brown solid, isolated yield 72% (49 mg), mp: 158-160 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.52 (d, *J* = 1.63 Hz, 1H), 8.45 (d, *J* = 8.42 Hz, 1H), 8.32 (d, *J* = 8.99 Hz, 1H), 8.28 (dd, *J* = 8.23, 1.15 Hz, 1H), 8.20-8.16 (m, 1H), 8.09-8.06 (m, 1H), 8.03 (dd, *J* = 8.99, 1.91 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (td, *J* = 7.27, 1.34 Hz, 1H), 7.51-7.46 (m, 2H), 7.38-7.34 (m, 1H), 7.26 (s, 1H), 4.46 (q, *J* = 7.27 Hz, 2H), 1.47 (t, *J* = 7.08 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  167.2, 136.4, 135.9, 135.4, 129.8, 128.8, 128.3, 128.2, 126.8, 125.7, 124.2, 124.1, 123.8, 123.7, 123.4, 122.9, 122.4, 122.3, 116.5, 113.6, 97.1, 60.8, 14.5. HRMS (ESI) m/z (M+H)<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>18</sub>NO<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> 340.1332, found 340.1335.



**12-fluoroindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine (3j**): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=5:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 64% (36 mg), mp: 146-148 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.47 (d, J = 8.21 Hz, 1H), 8.35 (dd, J = 8.11, 1.15 Hz, 1H), 8.30 (dd, J = 9.26, 4.30 Hz, 1H), 8.28-8.24 (m, 1H), 8.15-8.11 (m, 1H), 7.60 (td, J = 7.35, 1.34 Hz, 1H), 7.55-7.50 (m, 2H), 7.45 (dd, J = 8.97, 2.58 Hz, 1H), 7.40-7.36 (m, 1H), 7.22 (s, 1H), 7.11 (td, J = 8.97, 2.58 Hz, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  159.8, 157.4, 136.8, 135.6, 131.2 (d, J = 10.28 Hz), 130.5, 128.9, 128.3, 128.2, 126.9, 125.7, 124.2 (d, J = 12.84 Hz), 123.3, 122.5, 122.0, 116.0, 115.0 (d, J = 7.71 Hz), 110.1 (d, J = 25.69 Hz), 105.6 (d, J = 23.12 Hz), 96.0 (d, J = 4.65 Hz). The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



12-chloroindolo[1,2-f]phenanthridine (3k): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 70% (42 mg), mp: 173-174 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.40 (d, J = 8.58

Hz, 1H), 8.31 (d, J = 7.80 Hz, 1H), 8.25-8.21 (m, 2H), 8.10-8.07 (m, 1H), 7.74 (d, J = 1.98 Hz, 1H), 7.57 (t, J = 7.49 Hz, 1H), 7.53-7.48 (m, 2H), 7.36 (t, J = 7.49 Hz, 1H), 7.29 (dd, J = 9.04 Hz, 1.98 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (s, 1H).  $^{13}C{^{1}H}$  NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  139.4, 136.4, 135.5, 132.1, 131.4, 128.8, 128.3, 128.2, 127.3, 126.9, 125.6, 124.2, 124.1, 123.4, 122.4, 122.0, 116.1, 115.1, 95.5. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**11-methylindolo**[1,2-*f*]**phenanthridine (31)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 85% (48 mg), mp: 170-172 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.51 (d, *J* = 8.66 Hz, 1H), 8.28 (d, *J* = 7.94 Hz, 1H), 8.19-8.17 (m, 2H), 8.11-8.07 (m, 1H), 7.73 (d, *J* = 8.30 Hz, 1H), 7.59-7.55 (m, 1H), 7.49-7.43 (m, 2H), 7.33 (t, *J* = 7.94 Hz, 1H), 7.22-7.20 (m, 2H), 2.65 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  136.0, 134.7, 134.3, 131.8, 128.6, 128.1, 128.1, 127.5, 126.6, 126.3, 123.9, 123.9, 123.4, 122.8, 122.3, 122.1, 120.6, 116.3, 114.2, 96.0, 22.4. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**11-chloro-12-fluoroindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine** (**3m**): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 71% (45 mg), mp: 193-195 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.32-8.28 (m, 3H), 8.23-8.18 (m, 1H), 8.06-8.02 (m, 1H), 7.60-7.56 (m, 1H), 7.54-7.49 (m, 2H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 9.19 Hz, 1H), 7.39-7.35 (m, 1H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 0.29 Hz, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  155.0, 152.6, 137.1, 135.2, 130.0, 129.6 (d, *J* = 8.42 Hz), 129.0, 128.4 (d, *J* = 2.97 Hz), 126.9, 125.4, 124.2 (d, *J* = 5.94 Hz), 123.6, 122.5, 122.1, 115.8, 115.5 115.2, 115.0, 106.4 (d, *J* = 22.58 Hz), 95.9 (d, *J* = 4.16 Hz).

HRMS (ESI) m/z (M+H)<sup>+</sup> calcd for  $C_{20}H_{12}ClFN^+$  320.0637, found 320.0640.



6-methylindolo[1,2-f]phenanthridine (3n): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 79% (44 mg), mp: 165-167 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.36-8.32 (m, 2H), 8.18-8.14 (m, 1H), 8.11-8.07 (m, 1H), 8.03 (s, 1H), 7.86-7.84 (m, 1H), 7.48-7.43 (m, 2H), 7.42-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.31 (dd, J = 8.41, 1.40 Hz, 1H), 7.23 (s, 1H), 2.47 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 135.1, 133.8, 133.7, 132.2, 130.2, 129.4, 127.9, 127.6, 126.8, 126.1, 124.1, 124.0, 122.3, 121.8, 121.8, 121.5, 120.9, 116.0, 114.1, 95.8, 21.0. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>3</sup>



6-chloroindolo[1,2-f]phenanthridine (30): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 66% (40 mg), mp: 173-175 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.46 (d, J = 9.13 Hz, 1H), 8.30 (d, J = 8.30 Hz, 1H), 8.26 (d, J = 2.49 Hz, 1H), 8.17-8.13 (m, 2H), 7.86-7.84 (m, 1H), 7.56-7.48 (m, 3H), 7.42-7.36 (m, 2H), 7.27 (d, J = 0.51 Hz, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 134.9, 134.5, 133.8, 130.3, 130.1, 128.9, 128.5, 128.0, 126.4, 125.8, 124.3, 124.2, 123.9, 122.6, 122.4, 122.1, 121.3, 117.5, 114.0, 96.7. HRMS (ESI) m/z (M+H)<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>13</sub>ClN<sup>+</sup> 302.0731, found 302.0734.



6,12-dimethylindolo[1,2-f]phenanthridine Purification (**3p**): by column S12

chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 80% (47 mg), mp: 199-201 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.39 (d, J = 8.54 Hz, 1H), 8.24-8.22 (m, 2H), 8.14-8.11 (M, 2H), 7.61 (s, 1H), 7.50-7.46 (m, 2H), 7.37 (dd, J = 8.54, 1.39 Hz, 1H), 7.21-7.17 (m, 2H), 2.55 (s, 3H), 2.51 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  135.2, 133.9, 132.2, 132.1, 131.0, 130.5, 129.6, 128.0, 127.6, 126.8, 126.3, 124.2, 124.1, 123.5, 122.3, 121.8, 120.6, 116.0, 113.8, 95.4, 21.4, 21.1. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>18</sub>N+ (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 296.1434, found 296.1437.



**benzo[4,5]imidazo[1,2-***f***]phenanthridine (3q):** Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=10:1) as a white solid, isolated yield 62% (33 mg), mp: 144-146 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.79-8.76 (m, 1H), 8.37-8.35 (m, 1H), 8.27 (dd, J = 8.14, 1.02 Hz, 1H), 8.21-8.19 (m, 2H), 8.02-8.00 (m, 1H), 7.64-7.57 (m, 2H), 7.55-7.51 (m, 1H), 7.48 (td, J = 7.93, 0.86 Hz, 1H), 7.43-7.39 (m, 1H), 7.36-7.32 (m, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  147.3, 144.4, 134.2, 131.7, 130.2, 129.3, 128.9, 128.4, 125.9, 124.2, 124.0, 123.9, 123.2, 122.8, 122.1, 121.4, 120.2, 115.7, 113.8. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



3-methoxyindolo[1,2-f]phenanthridine and 2-methoxyindolo[1,2f]phenanthridine (3r: 3r' = 4: 1): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=10:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 67% (40 mg), mp: 143-144 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.37 (d, J = 8.31 Hz, 1.25H), 8.28-8.23 (m, 1.25H), 8.06-8.02 (m, 1.25H), 7.92 (d, J = 9.02 Hz, 0.25H), 8.83 (d, J =

8.78 Hz, 1H), 7.77-7.70 (m, 1.25H), 7.46-7.41 (m, 2H), 7.40-7.38 (m, 0.25H), 7.35-7.32 (m, 0.25H), 7.32-7.26 (m, 2.5H), 7.21-7.17 (m, 1.25H), 7.07 (s, 0.25H), 6.95 (s, 1H), 6.93-6.89 (m, 1.25H), 3.81 (s, 0.75H), 3.81 (s, 3H).  $^{13}C{^{1}H}$  NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  159.3, 159.3, 136.1, 135.3, 135.0, 134.9, 133.9, 133.6, 130.6, 130.2, 128.7, 128.1, 127.4, 127.1, 125.6, 124.0, 123.8, 123.2, 122.9, 122.7, 122.0, 121.9, 121.7, 121.6, 121.3, 120.9, 120.6, 120.2, 119.6, 116.2, 116.1, 116.0, 115.9, 114.2, 114.1, 106.2, 105.5, 96.1, 94.5, 55.3, 55.3. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**3-methylindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine** and **2-methylindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine** (**3s: 3s'** = **5: 3**): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 76% (43 mg), mp: 113-114 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.37 (d, *J* = 8.43 Hz, 1.6H), 8.25-8.22 (m, 1.6H), 8.13 (dd, *J* = 8.00, 1.14 Hz, 0.6H), 8.10 (dd, *J* = 8.00, 1.14 Hz, 1H), 7.91 (d, *J* = 8.29 Hz, 1H), 7.84-7.82 (m, 1H), 7.75 (s, 1H), 7.73-7.69 (m, 1.6H), 7.43-7.38 (m, 1.6H), 7.29-7.22 (m, 3.2H), 7.20-7.16 (m, 1.6H), 7.14-7.09 (m, 3.4H), 2.36 (s, 1.8H), 2.34 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  138.0, 137.5, 136.0, 135.6, 135.4, 135.3, 133.9, 133.7, 130.4, 130.3, 129.54, 129.1, 128.5, 128.1, 126.7, 125.9, 124.3, 124.1, 124.0, 123.8, 123.6, 123.6, 122.9, 122.8, 122.4, 122.3, 122.2, 122.0, 121.8, 121.7, 121.6, 120.9, 120.8, 116.2, 116.2, 114.2, 114.1, 95.9, 95.4, 21.8, 21.4. The spectral data were in accordance with the literature.<sup>2</sup>



**3-chloroindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine and 2-chloroindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine (3t: 3t' = 5: 2)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale green solid, isolated yield 54% (33 mg), mp: 126-127 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.54 (d, *J* = 8.43 Hz, 1.4H), 8.38 (d, *J* = 8.43 Hz, 1.4H), 8.27-8.23 (m, 1.4H), 8.18 (d, *J* = 1.98 Hz, 0.4H), 8.15 (d, *J* = 8.68 Hz, 1H), 8.09 (d, *J* = 2.23 Hz, 1H), 8.05 (d, *J* = 8.43 Hz, 0.4H), 7.86-7.83 (m, 1.4H), 7.64-7.58 (m, 1.4H), 7.46-7.44 (m, 1H), 7.42-7.40 (m, 1.4H), 7.39-7.38 (m, 1H), 7.37 (s, 1.4H), 7.35 (s, 0.4H), 7.26 (s, 1.4H), 7.24 (s, 0.4H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  136.2, 135.9, 134.4, 134.1, 134.0, 133.9, 133.8, 130.3, 130.1, 129.5, 129.1, 128.4, 128.4, 128.0, 127.6, 125.6, 125.3, 124.6, 124.2, 124.1, 124.0, 123.7, 123.3, 122.6, HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>13</sub>ClN+ (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 302.0731, found 302.0734.



**3-nitroindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine and 2-nitroindolo**[**1**,**2**-*f*]**phenanthridine (3u: 3u' = 2: 1)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=10:1) as a pale yellow solid, isolated yield 39% (24 mg), mp: 154-155 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.90 (d, *J* = 2.01 Hz, 0.5H), 8.73 (s, 1H), 8.44 (d, *J* = 8.22 Hz, 1.5H), 8.30 (t, *J* = 8.59 Hz, 1.5H), 8.23-8.21 (m, 0.5H), 8.17 (td, *J* = 8.04, 1.10 Hz, 1.5H), 8.12 (d, *J* = 2.01 Hz, 2H), 8.01 (d, *J* = 8.77 Hz, 0.5H), 7.86-7.82 (m, 1.5H), 7.66-7.59 (m, 1.5H), 7.49-7.39 (m, 3H), 7.38-7.33 (m, 1.5H), 7.29 (s, 0.5H), 7.23 (s, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  147.0, 146.6, 136.7, 136.0, 134.3, 133.8, 133.1, 132.9, 131.7, 130.9, 130.8, 130.1, 129.9, 127.2, 126.6, 125.0, 124.6, 124.3, 123.7, 123.6, 123.4, 123.2, 122.4, 122.4, 121.8, 121.6, 121.5, 120.4, 120.2, 119.3, 118.2, 116.4, 116.3, 114.3, 114.2, 99.7, 98.2. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>+ (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 313.0972, found 313.0975.



**3-fluoroindolo**[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine and 2-fluoroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3v: **3**v' = 100: 33): Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=10:1) as a pale yellow solid, isolated yield 65% (37 mg), mp: 144-145 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  8.41 (d, *J* = 8.36 Hz, 1.33H), 8.30-8.26 (m, 1.33H), 8.09 (dd, *J* = 8.06 Hz, 1.19 Hz, 0.33H), 8.05-8.02 (m, 1.33H), 7.94 (dd, *J* = 8.86, 5.77 Hz, 1H), 7.81-7.77 (m, 1.33H), 7.70 (dd, *J* = 10.75 Hz, 2.59 Hz, 1H), 7.62 (dd, *J* = 9.56 Hz, 2.69 Hz, 0.33H), 7.54-7.47 (m, 1.33H), 7.41-7.33 (m, 2.66H), 7.29-7.24 (m, 1.33H), 7.13-7.09 (m, 1.33H), 7.09-7.05 (m, 1.33H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  163.6, 161.2 (d, *J* = 2.92 Hz), 136.0, 135.3, 134.4, 134.0 (d, *J* = 3.82 Hz), 133.9, 133.6, 130.3, 130.0, 129.2, 128.7 (d, *J* = 8.11 Hz), 128.4, 127.7 (d, *J* = 9.07 Hz), 126.1 (d, *J* = 8.59 Hz), 124.6 (d, *J* = 9.07 Hz), 124.0, 123.6, 123.0, 122.9, 122.4 (d, *J* = 2.80 Hz), 121.9, 121.8 (d, *J* = 2.03 Hz), 121.3, 121.2, 121.1 (d, *J* = 2.92 Hz), 120.9, 116.2, 116.1, 115.9, 115.6, 115.4, 114.2, 114.1, 109.6, 109.4, 108.4, 108.2, 97.0, 95.8 (d, *J* = 1.9 Hz). HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>13</sub>FN+ (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 286.1027, found 286.1030.



**1-(2-iodophenyl)-2-phenyl-1***H***-indole (4)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale yellow solid, isolated yield 70% (55 mg), mp: 163-164 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  8.05 (dd, *J* = 7.99 Hz, 1.02 Hz, 1H), 7.82-7.80 (m, 1H), 7.47 (td, *J* = 7.70 Hz, 1.02 Hz, 1H), 7.41 (dd, *J* = 7.99 Hz, 1.89 Hz, 2H), 7.36-7.32 (m, 4H), 7.31-7.27 (m, 2H), 7.20 (td, *J* = 7.84 Hz, 1.45 Hz, 1H), 7.06-7.03 (m, 1H), 6.94 (s, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$ 141.5, 140.8, 140.0, 138.5, 132.3, 130.8, 129.8, 129.2, 128.7, 128.2, 127.4, 122.3, 120.8, 120.5, 111.1, 103.4, 99.9. HRMS (ESI) m/z (M+H)<sup>+</sup> calcd for  $C_{20}H_{15}IN^+$  396.0244, found 396.0247.



**1-([1,1'-biphenyl]-2-yl)-1***H***-indole (5)**: Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether: ethyl acetate=100:1) as a pale yellow solid, isolated yield 55% (30 mg), mp: 186-187 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.66-7.61 (m, 2H), 7.57-7.51 (m, 3H), 7.32-7.30 (m, 1H), 7.20-7.13 (m, 5H), 7.07-7.04 (m, 2H), 6.86 (d, J = 3.14 Hz, 1H), 6.50 (d, J = 3.27 Hz, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 138.9, 138.5, 136.8, 136.7, 131.5, 129.1, 128.4, 128.3, 128.2, 128.1, 128.0, 127.9, 127.3, 121.9, 120.7, 119.9, 110.5, 102.7. HRMS (ESI) m/z (M+H)<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sup>+</sup> 270.1277, found 270.1280.

#### 6) References

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- Liu, X.; Ban, Y.-L.; Liu, Y.; Zhuang, M.; Zhou, Y. Palladium-catalyzed C–H bond activation and decarboxylation for the assembly of indolo[1,2-*f*] phenanthridine. *Org. Biomol. Chem.*, 2024, 22, 9188-9191.
- Ngo, T. N.; Ehlers, P.; Dang, T. T. Villingera, A.; Langer, P. Synthesis of indolo[1,2-f]phenanthridines by Pd-catalyzed domino C–N coupling/hydroamination/C–H arylation reactions. Org. Biomol. Chem., 2015, 13, 3321-3330.

# 7) Scanned <sup>1</sup>H NMR and <sup>13</sup>C NMR Spectra of All Compounds.

indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3a): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





14-methylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3b): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)



<sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)



1-(indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridin-14-yl)ethan-1-one (3c): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





### 13-methylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3d): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





# 13-chloroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3e): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





12-methylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3f): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





12-methoxyindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3g): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





12-(benzyloxy)indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3h): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





### ethyl indolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine-12-carboxylate (3i): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





## 12-fluoroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3j): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





### 12-chloroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3k): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





## 11-methylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3l): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





11-chloro-12-fluoroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3m): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





6-methylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3n): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





### 6-chloroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (30): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





## 6,12-dimethylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3p): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





benzo[4,5]imidazo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3q): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





3-methoxyindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine *f*]phenanthridine (3r: 3r' = 4: 1): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)

and

2-methoxyindolo[1,2-





3-methylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine and 2-methylindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3s: 3s' = 5: 3): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





3-chloroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine and 2-chloroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3t: 3t' = 5: 2): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





3-nitroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine and 2-nitroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3u: 3u' = 2: 1): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





3-fluoroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine and 2-fluoroindolo[1,2-*f*]phenanthridine (3v: 3v' = 100: 33): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





1-(2-iodophenyl)-2-phenyl-1*H*-indole (4): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)





### 1-([1,1'-biphenyl]-2-yl)-1*H*-indole (5): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)



