RESEARCH ARTICLE

SYNTHESES OF NOVEL α,β-UNSATURATED CHROMIUM FISCHER CARBENE COMPLEXES USING β-BROMOSTYRENE

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 17th August, 2011
Received in revised form 09th September, 2011
Accepted 15th October, 2011
Published online 20th November, 2011

Key words:
α,β-unsaturation,
Chromium Fischer carbene syntheses,
β-bromostyrene.

ABSTRACT

Syntheses of α,β-unsaturated neutral Chromium Fischer carbene complexes bearing alkoxy groups as donor substituents have been explored. Treating β-bromostyrene with a base and chromium hexacarbonyl followed by alkylation with an alkyl iodide produced the alkoxystyryl carbene complex 1 in modest yield. The results however did not show significant variation in the yield of 1 with the size of the side chain R. Owing to their resemblance to α,β-unsaturated carbonyl compounds, these compounds can provide very useful protocols for the synthesis of organic compounds.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed many developments in the synthesis and transformations of Fischer carbenes. α,β-Unsaturated chromium Fischer carbene complexes have become important reagents in synthetic organic chemistry (Frank et al., 1993). Pentacarbonyl (alkenylalkoxy carbene) chromium (0) complexes fall within this class of carbene complexes. The chemistry of these carbene complexes is analogous to those of α,β-unsaturated carbonyl compounds and acid derivatives. The reactivity of these carbene complexes towards a variety of substrates has previously been reported. Nucleophilic additions to these carbenes via Michael-type additions have been studied extensively. (Nakamura et al., 1993). (Scheme 1.)

\[
\text{[(CO)₅Cr=}] + \text{Nu}^- \rightarrow \text{[(CO)₅Cr=Nu}^-\text{R']} 
\]

Scheme 1

Typical examples of reported syntheses are

- Preparation via allenylidene intermediate. (Barluenga, 2006) (Scheme 3)
- Preparation from reaction of metal hexacarbonyl with vinyl bromide in the presence of a strong base, followed by alkylation. (Sultemeyer, J and Dotz, K.H., 2000) (Scheme 4).

[4 + 2] cycloaddition of dienes to the carbene fragment in these complexes have also been reported. (Wulf et al., 1990, 1992). (Scheme 2.)

\[
\text{[(CO)₅Cr=]} \rightarrow \text{[(CO)₅Cr=]} 
\]

Scheme 2
The present study was aimed at synthesizing a wide range of novel α,β-unsaturated Fischer carbene bearing bulky alkyloxy donor groups via scheme 4 due to the flexibility of alkylation. These compounds can be very useful in the development of a wide range of synthetic protocols for complex organic molecules.

EXPERIMENTAL

Materials and instrumentation

All common reagents were obtained from commercial suppliers and used without further purification unless otherwise indicated. Distilled water was deoxygenated by purging with argon prior to use. β-bromostyrene was obtained as the (cis-trans) – β-bromostyrene (85:15) and used without further purification. Lithium bis(trimethylsilyl) amide was distilled from sodium benzophenone ketyl. Solvents for chromatography were not purified. Chromatograms were visualised under ultraviolet light. All reported yields are calculated from purified compounds unless otherwise stated. NMR spectra were recorded on (Joel JNM-EX400). Chemical shifts δ for 1H are referenced to residual chloroform (CDCl3, δ = 7.24 ppm) as internal standard unless otherwise stated.

General synthetic procedures and reactions

All reactions involving air-sensitive compounds were carried out under argon atmosphere. Unless otherwise stated, inert atmosphere was maintained with argon filled balloon. Preparation of the carbene complexes were according to the procedure earlier reported by (Sultemeyer and Dotz, 2000) with little modification.

General synthesis of carbene complexes 10b, 10c, 10d, and 10e

Pentacarbonyl (alkoxyxystryl carbene) chromium (0) complexes 10b, 10c and 10d and 10e were prepared using a similar procedure. (Scheme 4). About 9.2mmol of trans-β-bromostyrene was dissolved in 200mL dry ether in a 250mL three-neck round bottom flask at -78°C. Then about 20.2mmol (13.5mL) of t-butyllithium (1.5M in hexane) was transferred into flask via a syringe and the mixture stirred at this temperature for 2hours by which period the mixture changed from orange to deep red. About 9.2mmol (2g) (CO)3Cr was then added to the deep red resulting solution obtained above and stirring prolonged for another 2hours at reflux temperature. Solvent was removed on a rotary evaporator to obtain a red residue. The residue was dissolved in an aqueous solution of tetramethylammonium bromide (0.9g in 100mL water) and 13.8mmol of the appropriated alkyl iodide RI, added and stirring allowed for 2hours at 70°C. The resulting solution was extracted with three 30mL-portions of hexane. The combined hexane layers was dried over anhydrous magnesium sulphate and filtered through a bed of celite. Solvent was removed from filtrate and a red solid obtained.

Synthesis of pentacarbonyl(isopropylxystryl carbene)chromium(0), 1a.

Using isopropyl iodide as the alkylating agent in the above procedure gave carbene complex 1a (42% yield). 1H NMR (CDCl3): δ 7.4-7.2(m, Ar-H), 7.05(d, H=C=CHPh), 6.7(d, H=C=CHPh), 4.34(m, H(CH3)2), 1.8(d, (CH3)2). Rf = 0.63 (hexanes).

Synthesis of pentacarbonyl(sec-butylxystrylcarbene) chromium(0), 1b.

Using sec-butyl iodide as the alkylating agent gave carbene complex 1b (40% yield). 1H NMR (CDCl3): δ 7.4-7.2(m, Ar-H), 7.02(d, H=C=CHPh), 6.7(d, CH=CHPh), 4.0(m, H), 1.8(m, H=CH2), 1.6(d, H=CH2), 1.0(t, CH3CH2). Rf = 0.47 (hexanes).

Synthesis of pentacarbonyl(isobutyloxystryl carbene)chromium (0), 1c.

Using isobutyl iodide as the alkylating agent gave carbene complex 1c (45.3% yield). 1H NMR (CDCl3): δ 7.6-7.3(m, Ar-H), 3.4(d, OCH), 2.0(m, CH), 1.1(d, CH3). Rf = 0.33(hexamnes).

Synthesis of pentacarbonyl(benzylxystryl carbene)chromium(0), 1d.

Using benzyl iodide as the alkylating agent gave carbene complex 1d (41.2% yield). 1H NMR (CDCl3): δ 7.6-7.2(m, Ar-H), 7.1(d, H=C=CHPh), 4.6(s, CH2). Rf = 0.49 (hexanes).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We adopted the procedure reported in scheme 4 for syntheses of 1a,b,c,d using β-bromostyrene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>R1</th>
<th>I (yield)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>isopropyl</td>
<td>1a (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>sec-butyl</td>
<td>1b (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>isobutyl</td>
<td>1c (45.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>benzyl</td>
<td>1d (41.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

We were able to synthesize four novel α,β- unsaturated Fischer carbene complexes by treating β-bromostyrene with...
butyllithium followed by chromium hexacarbonyl and alkylating with a range of alkyl iodides.

REFERENCES


Frank Stein, Michael Duetsch, Ehmke Pohl, Regine Herbst-Irmer, and Armin de Meijere, 1993, Organometallics 12, 2556-2567.

