

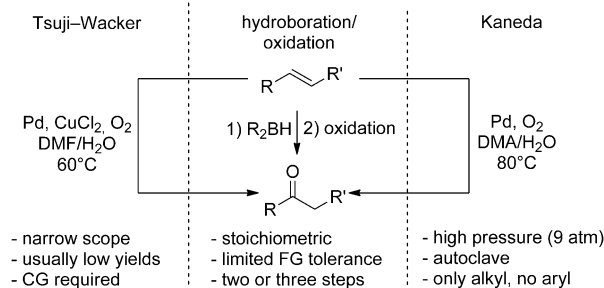
Synthetic Methods

Practical and General Palladium-Catalyzed Synthesis of Ketones from Internal Olefins**

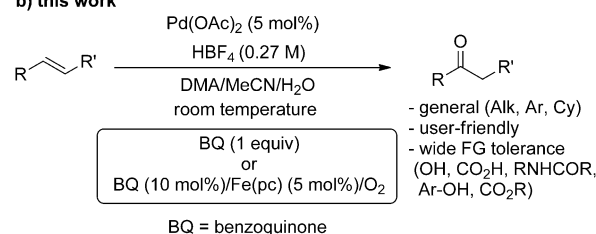
Bill Morandi, Zachary K. Wickens, and Robert H. Grubbs*

Ketones are ubiquitous chemical entities across the molecular sciences.^[1] They serve as versatile intermediates in target-oriented synthesis, are present in a wide range of natural products and drugs, are valuable industrial products, and mediate important biochemical pathways. A simple catalytic oxidation of internal alkenes under ambient conditions would therefore represent a powerful synthetic tool to access valuable ketones, since simple internal olefins are easily accessible from petroleum and renewable resources such as seed oils. Additionally, well-established synthetic routes exist to access more functionalized internal alkenes, such as carbonyl olefination^[2] and olefin metathesis.^[3] Owing to the lack of an efficient catalytic transformation to synthesize ketones from internal olefins, the hydroboration/oxidation sequence is still commonly used, particularly in target-oriented synthesis (Scheme 1).^[4] A major drawback of this procedure is the low functional-group (FG) compatibility of highly reactive borane reagents, as well as the inherent stoichiometric and multistep nature of the process. A direct, catalytic methodology to perform this transformation would be highly desirable. A well-studied catalytic transformation to access methyl ketones from terminal olefins is the Tsuji–Wacker reaction.^[5] However, in this reaction internal olefins are unreactive unless suitable coordinating groups (CGs) are present to facilitate the process. In the latter case, the success of the transformation is highly substrate-dependent, as shown by the variable reported yields.^[6] These aspects considerably limit the scope of the transformation. More recently, Kaneda and co-workers disclosed an elegant oxygen-coupled, copper-free Wacker oxidation of internal olefins.^[7] This protocol shows improved substrate scope, but requires the use of high oxygen pressures (9 atm before addition of alkene followed by 3 atm) and special equipment (autoclave). This limits its application in laboratory-scale research.^[8] Moreover, it has recently been emphasized that the ease of use of a synthetic methodology is of paramount importance to its broad

a) literature precedent



b) this work



Scheme 1. Summary of the work. BQ = benzoquinone, CG = coordinating group, DMA = dimethylacetamide, FG = functional group, pc = phthalocyanine.

adoption across the molecular sciences.^[9] Therefore, the development of a general and convenient palladium-catalyzed oxidation of internal olefins to access ketones is still an unmet challenge in catalysis.

Herein, we report a simple catalytic method for the preparation of ketones from a broad range of internal olefins. Wide functional-group tolerance (alcohol, acid, aldehyde, ester, phenol, amide, alkyl, aryl, cyclic) should ensure broad applicability across the chemical sciences. The process requires a simple palladium complex, an inexpensive oxidant, dilute acid and proceeds under ambient conditions. Alternatively, the reaction can be scaled-up and coupled to oxygen (1 atm, balloon) as a terminal oxidant using a biomimetic triple catalytic system. Mechanistically intriguing features of this transformation have been revealed, such as an important synergistic solvent effect, a complex acid dependence, and a difference in reactivity between *trans* and *cis* alkenes.

At the outset of our investigations, we intended to devise a protocol including the following features to ensure broad synthetic utility: room temperature, ambient pressure, simple setup, and broad functional-group tolerance. We initially started with the following reaction conditions: MeCN/H₂O as the solvent, *trans*-4-octene as model substrate, palladium acetate as catalyst, and benzoquinone (BQ) as an easy to

[*] Dr. B. Morandi, Z. K. Wickens, Prof. Dr. R. H. Grubbs
Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, CA 91125 (USA)
E-mail: rhg@caltech.edu

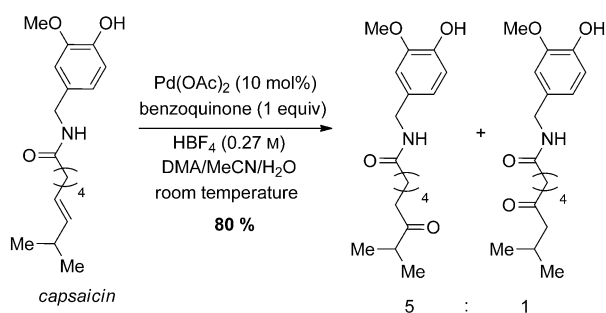
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derivative (Table 2, entry 5). The electron-neutral aromatic substrate afforded a nearly 1:1 mixture of isomers, with a slight difference in regioselectivity for the *trans* and the *cis* alkene (Table 2, entries 6–7). Cinnamyl acetate, in contrast, afforded full regioselectivity for the Markovnikov product, thus suggesting a strong directing effect of the acetate group (Table 2, entry 8). Importantly, no benzaldehydes were obtained as side-products with styrenes (Table 2, entries 5–8), which is in contrast to the reactions using high pressure of oxygen.^[12] O-functionalized homoallylic compounds afforded good regioselectivity (4:1) for oxidation of the more distal position (Table 2, entries 9–10).

In light of recent growing interest for direct functionalization of compounds derived from seed oil,^[13] unprotected oleic acid derivatives (Table 2, entries 12–14) were examined. The method proceeded in high yield with these compounds bearing unprotected acid and alcohol functional groups. Finally, we briefly evaluated the ability of this system to perform the oxidation of terminal olefins. Dodecene, a substrate classically prone to isomerization in Wacker chemistry,^[14] afforded the desired product in high yield. Allylic phthalimides were recently shown by Feringa and co-workers to afford regioselective formation of the aldehyde,^[15] and this outcome was also obtained using our conditions.

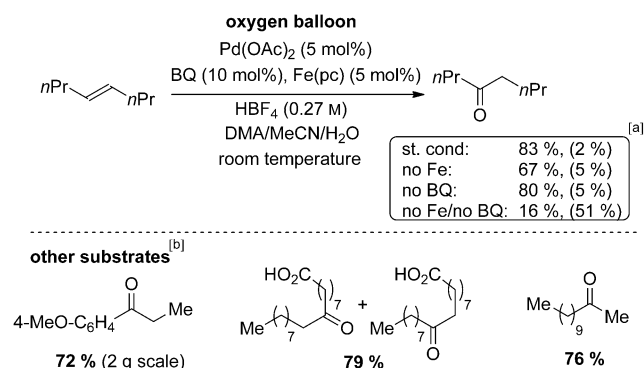
With continuing interest in testing the synthetic potential of this new transformation, we probed its application on a polyfunctionalized natural product. Capsaicin is an important compound with applications in cancer^[16] and pain-relief^[17] research. The internal alkene group was smoothly oxidized in the presence of the other functional groups, affording high yield of the desired product (Scheme 2). This result bodes well for the application of this methodology to more complex targets. The notable regioselectivity (5:1) was rationalized by steric repulsion in the hydroxypalladation step between the Pd center and the *i*Pr group.



Scheme 2. Oxidation of a bioactive natural product.

Recognizing the inherent limitation of the use of stoichiometric benzoquinone for larger-scale applications, we undertook preliminary investigations to use oxygen as terminal oxidant. Bäckvall and co-workers have extensively studied a biomimetic triple catalytic system to facilitate palladium-catalyzed oxidation reactions under atmospheric pressure of oxygen by using catalytic amounts of benzoquinone.^[18] Initial results using only 10 mol % benzoquinone and

5 mol % Fe(pc) (pc = phthalocyanine) mirrored the outcome of the stoichiometric process. Control experiments showed that the reaction using both the iron catalyst and benzoquinone afforded the highest yield and best prevented isomerization. Unexpectedly, catalyst turnover was also observed in the absence of redox catalysts (Scheme 3). Indeed, the



Scheme 3. Catalytic system for aerobic oxidation. [a] Yields determined by GC using tridecane as a standard. Yields in parentheses represent the combined yield of **2** and **3**. [b] Yields of isolated products.

reaction went nearly to completion in all three control reactions performed. Under the directly oxygen-coupled system, full conversion to a mixture of octanone isomers (16%, 20%, 31%) was obtained. This unprecedented outcome might be the result of a synergistic solvent effect, as DMA was previously shown to facilitate direct coupling to oxygen in palladium catalysis.^[10] The low selectivity for 4-octanone was a result of rapid competing isomerization under these conditions. It is conceivable that the iron catalyst and benzoquinone suppress isomerization through the trapping of a putative palladium hydride species.^[19] Alternatively, the redox catalysts could accelerate the rate of oxidation relative to that of isomerization.^[20] Despite the mixture of isomers obtained, this result holds great promise for the potential development of a direct oxygen-coupled oxidation of internal olefins under ambient conditions.^[21] We then applied the triple catalytic system to the oxidation of selected key substrates from Table 2 in good yields. The results obtained with this system bode well for larger-scale application, a feature further confirmed by the comparable yield obtained for the oxidation of *trans*-anethole on a 2 g scale.

Owing to the scarcity of reports involving oxidation of internal olefins and the corresponding lack of mechanistic information, we became interested in following the progress of the reaction with stoichiometric benzoquinone and both *trans*-4-octene (Figure 1 a) and *cis*-4-octene (Figure 1 b). Oxidation of the *cis* isomer was significantly faster and proceeded with slightly more isomerization than of the *trans* isomer.^[22] The data did not fit a simple first-order rate law, and thus seems to indicate a more complex dependence on alkene concentration.^[23]

In conclusion, we have developed a general and practical palladium-catalyzed oxidation to access ketones from a wide variety of internal olefins. The novel transformation showed

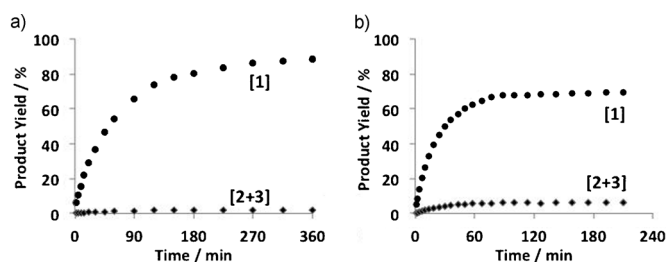


Figure 1. Reaction Progress. a) *trans*-4-Octene as substrate. b) *cis*-4-Octene as substrate. 1 = 4-Octanone, 2 = 3-octanone, 3 = 2-octanone.

a wide substrate scope (alcohol, acid, aldehyde, ester, phenol, amide, alkyl, aryl, cyclic) under experimentally simple reaction conditions. Applications of this procedure to the oxidation of a natural product and unprotected seed-oil derivatives have been reported, as well as mechanistically intriguing features (synergistic solvent effect, acid dependence, and increased reactivity of *cis* alkenes). Importantly, an oxygen-coupled procedure was developed for larger-scale applications. We anticipate that this reaction could find broad use across the chemical sciences owing to its simplicity and generality.

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