

REACTIONS OF HALONITROIMIDAZOLES WITH NUCLEOPHILES (REVIEW)

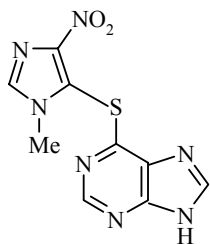
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Published data on the reactions of 4(5)-halo-5(4)-nitro- and 2-halo-4(5)-nitroimidazoles with nucleophiles are reviewed and classified.

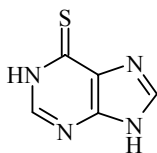
Keywords: amines, halonitroimidazoles, dibromoimidazole, dichloroimidazole, nucleophiles, isomerism.

On account of their chemical stability, high reactivity, and availability 4(5)-halo-5(4)-nitro- and 2-halo-4(5)-nitroimidazoles have proved useful substrates for the study of reactions with O-, S-, N-, C-, and N,O-nucleophiles. The high reactivity of the halogen atom in the series of 4(5)-halo-5(4)-nitroimidazoles is brought about by the presence of the strong electron-accepting NO₂ group at the "ortho" position. The activating effect of the NO₂ group also extends to the halogen atom at position 2 of the imidazole ring.

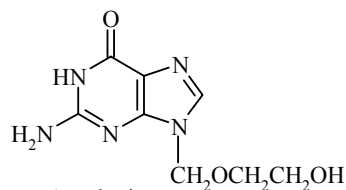
The products from the reactions of halonitroimidazoles with various nucleophiles have found use in fine organic synthesis, especially in the synthesis of heterocycles with a bridging nitrogen atom, biologically active compounds, and medicinal preparation. Thus, 1-methyl-4-nitro-5-(6-purinyl)mercaptoimidazole has found use under the name azathioprine as a medical preparations in the transplantation of vital organs and the treatment of a series of autoimmune diseases [1-4].



Azathioprine



Mercaptopurine



Acyclovir

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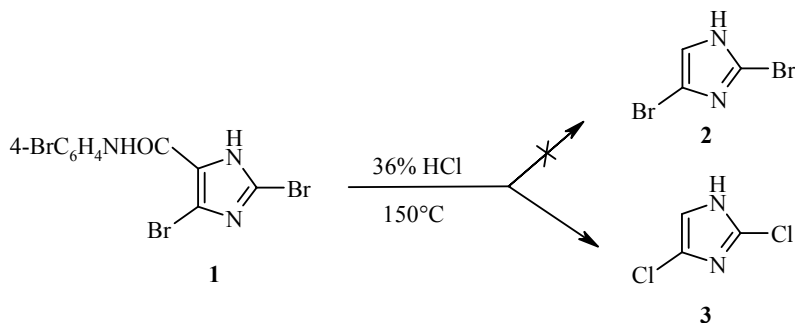
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For the creation of azathioprine and also the antileukemic and antiviral agents 6-mercaptopurine and acyclovir the British scientists G. Elion and G. Hitchins were awarded a Nobel prize.

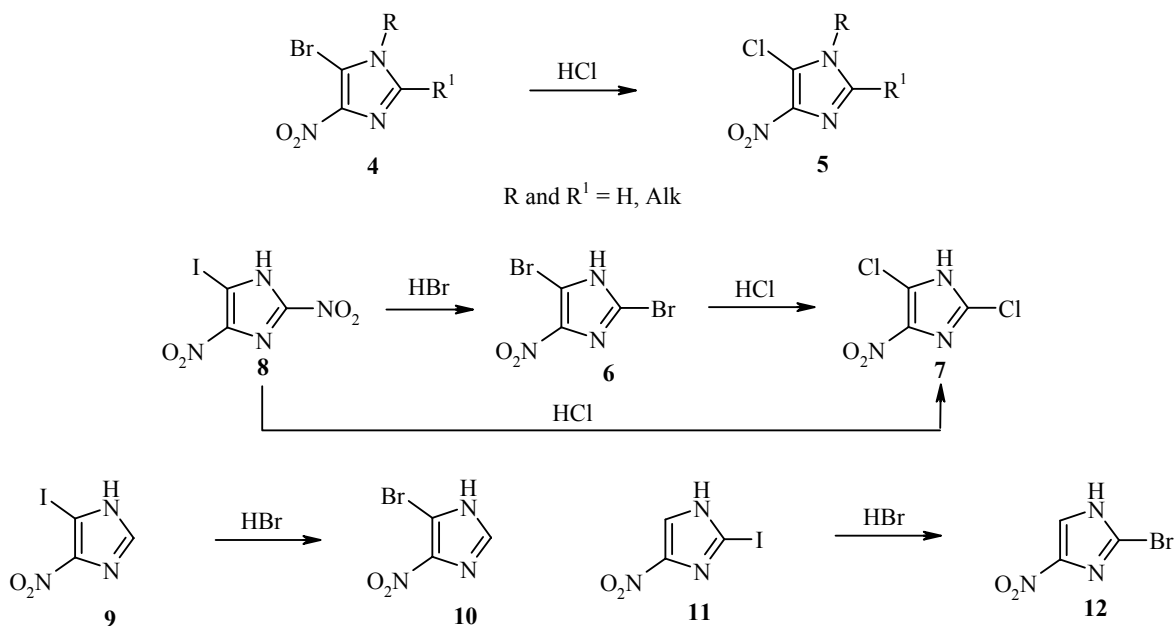
1. Transhalogenation

In the imidazole series the substitution of one halogen atom by another was discovered by accident. During the hydrolysis of the 4-bromoanilide of 2,4(5)-dibromoimidazole-5(4)-carboxylic acid (**1**) in concentrated HCl at 150°C 2,4(5)-dichloroimidazole (**3**) was isolated instead of the expected 2,4(5)-dibromoimidazole (**2**) [5].

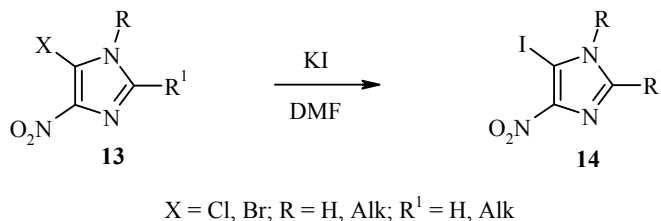


Transhalogenation with concentrated HCl and HBr later began to be used for preparative purposes not only in the production of chloroimidazoles [6] and fluoroimidazoles [7] from the more readily available bromoimidazoles but also for the synthesis of chloronitroimidazoles **5** and **7** [6, 8-12] from bromonitroimidazoles **4** and **6** and iodonitroimidazole **8**. Bromonitroimidazoles **6** [8], **10** [8], and **12** [13] were obtained from the iodonitroimidazoles **8**, **9**, and **11**.

In the case of 5(4)-iodo-2,4(5)-dinitroimidazole (**8**) the NO₂ group at position 2 of the imidazole ring was also replaced by a bromine atom and a chlorine atom [8].



A series of 5-iodo-4-nitroimidazoles **14** were obtained by the reaction of 5-chloro(bromo)-4-nitroimidazoles **13** with potassium iodide [14].

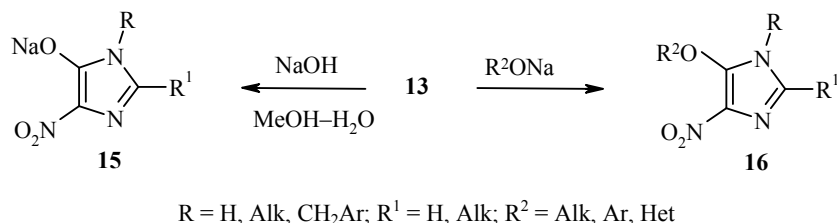


2. Reactions with O-Nucleophiles

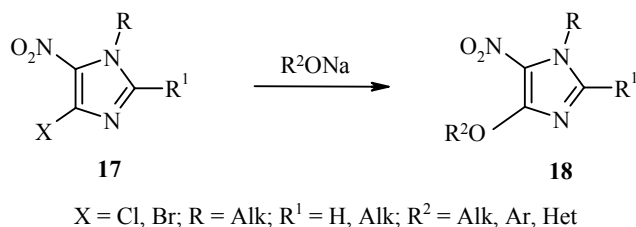
The reaction of 5-halo-4-nitroimidazoles **13** with NaOH leads to the sodium salts of 5-hydroxy-4-nitroimidazoles **15** [14], while the reaction with sodium alcoholates leads to 5-alkoxy-4-nitroimidazoles **16** [12-18].

In [19] it was noted that 5-bromo-1,2-dimethyl-4-nitroimidazole, unlike its 4-bromo-5-nitro isomer, does not react with alcoholates, contradicting the experimental data from other authors [12-18].

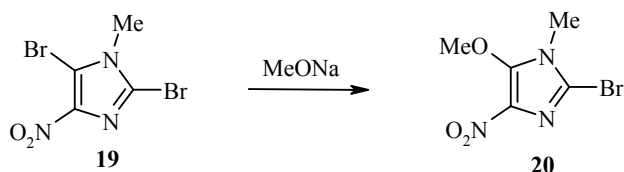
5-Halo-4-nitroimidazoles **13** also react with phenols [16-18, 20, 21], naphthols [21], 2-hydroxy heterocycles [20], and 8-hydroxyquinoline [21], forming the ethers of 5-hydroxy-4-nitroimidazoles **16**.

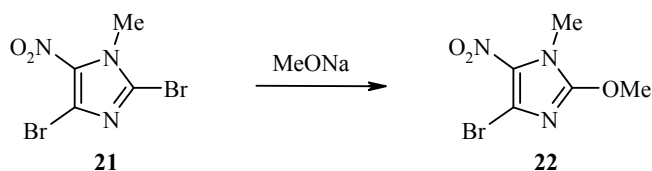


O-Nucleophilic substitution in the reaction of 4-halo-5-nitroimidazoles **17** with sodium alcoholates [19, 22], phenol [22], and 8-hydroxyquinoline [22] takes place in the same way as for 5-halo-4-nitroimidazoles, and the ethers of 4-hydroxy-5-nitroimidazoles **18** are obtained.



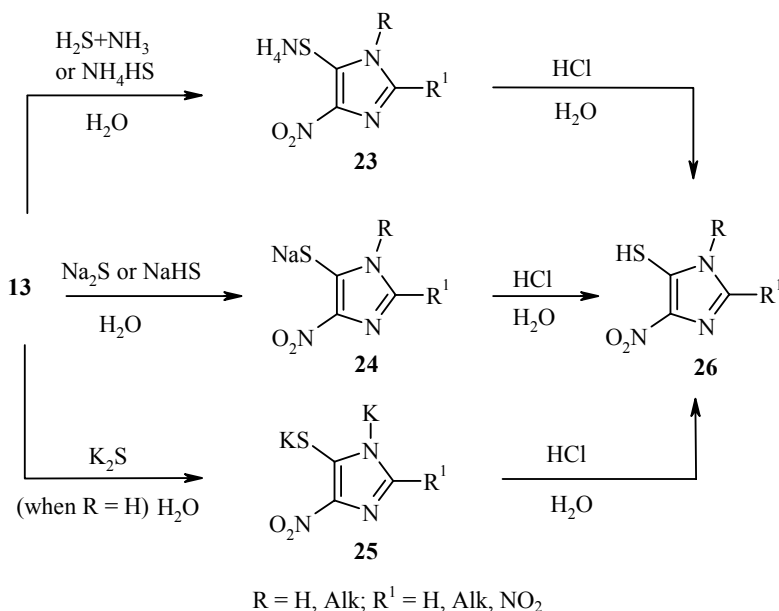
The reaction of 2,5-dibromo-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazole **19** and its 5-nitro isomer **21** with sodium methoxide takes place differently. The 5-methoxy derivative **20** (yield 40%) is obtained in the case of the dibromide **19**, and the 2-methoxy derivative **22** (yield 100%) is obtained in the case of the dibromide **21** [12].



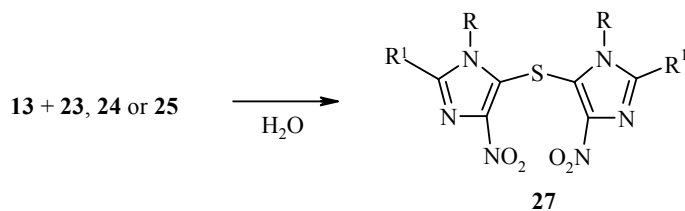


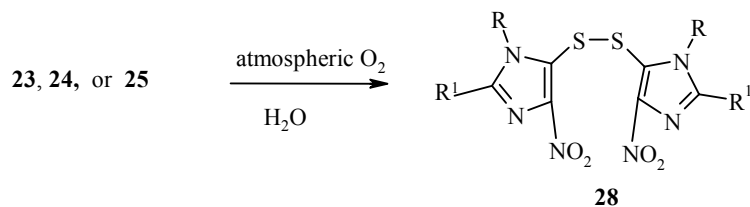
3. Reactions with S-Nucleophiles

Halonitroimidazoles enter readily into reaction with S-nucleophiles of both inorganic and organic type. Thus, the reaction of 5-halo-4-nitroimidazoles **13** with hydrogen sulfide in aqueous or alcohol solutions of ammonia [23-30], ammonium hydrosulfide [23], sodium sulfide [23], sodium hydrosulfide [31], potassium hydrosulfide [23], and thiourea [23] gave the ammonium, sodium, and potassium salts of 5-mercapto-4-nitroimidazoles **23-25**, from which the free 5-mercapto-4-nitroimidazoles **26** were isolated by decomposition with hydrochloric or acetic acid [23-32].



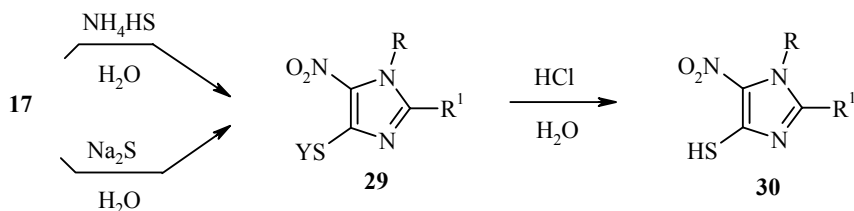
In certain cases the reactions of halonitroimidazoles **13** with ammonium and alkali metal sulfides and hydrosulfides are accompanied by the formation of side products – di(nitroimidazolyl) sulfides **27** and di(nitroimidazolyl) disulfides **28** [23]. The sulfides **27** are obtained as a result of the reaction of the original halonitroimidazoles **13** with the formed salts of nitromercaptoimidazoles **23-25** and the disulfides **28** as a result of oxidation of the salts of the nitromercaptoimidazoles **23-25** by atmospheric oxygen.





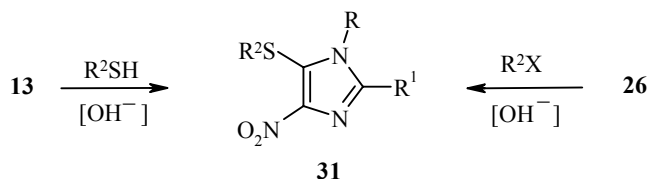
R and R¹ = H, Alk

4-Mercapto-5-nitroimidazoles **30** were synthesized by the reaction of 4-halo-5-nitroimidazoles **17** with hydrogen sulfide [12], ammonium hydrosulfide [23], and sodium sulfide [23].



Y = NH₄, Na; R = Alk; R¹ = H, Alk, CN

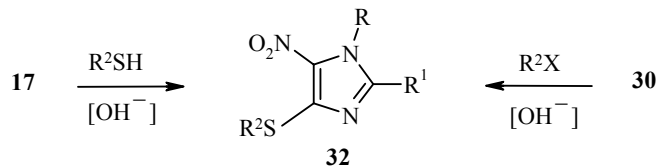
The reaction of 5-halo-4-nitroimidazoles **13** with thiols [17, 20, 23-50] and of 5-mercapto-4-nitroimidazoles **26** with halide compounds [24, 26, 31-36, 38, 39, 47-53] lead to the formation of the thioethers **31**.



R and R¹ = H, Alk; R² = Alk, CH₂COOH, Ar, Aralk, Het; X = Cl, Br, I

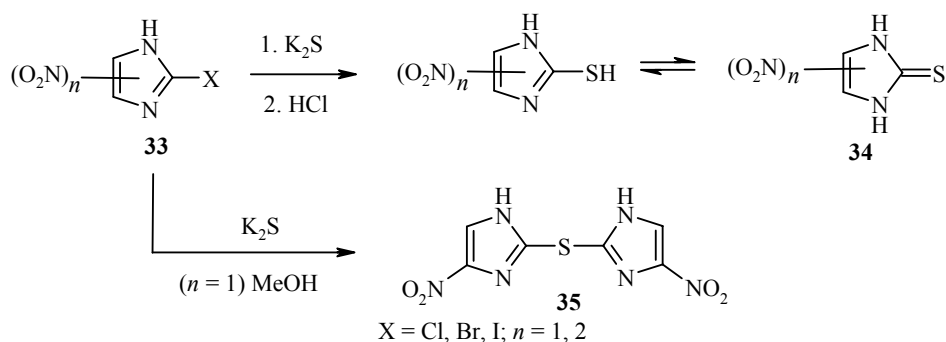
Of the thioethers **31** azathioprine (R = Me, R¹ = H, R² = 6-purinyl) [33-36] and the compound with the code C-87 (R = Et, R¹ = Me, R² = 2-amino-6-purinyl) [46] have strong immunodepressant activity.

The thioethers **32** were synthesized according to similar schemes by the reactions of 4-halo-5-nitroimidazoles **17** with mercaptans [12, 13, 22, 36, 47, 48, 50] and of 4-mercapto-5-nitroimidazoles **30** with halide compounds [12, 45, 47, 50].

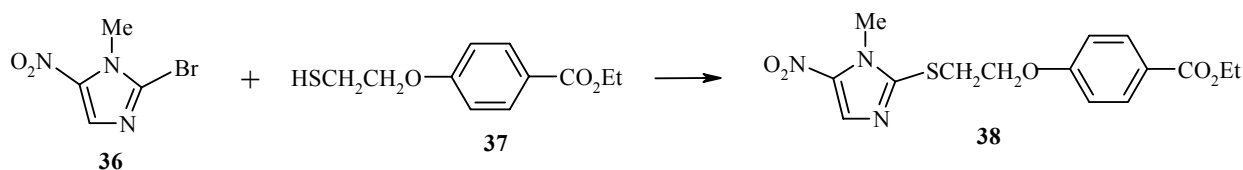


R and R¹ = H, Alk; R² = Alk, Ar, CH₂Ar, Het; X = Cl, Br, I

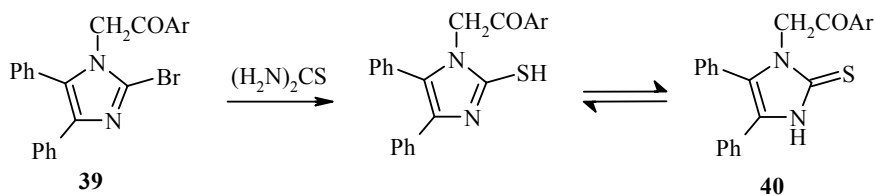
The reaction of 2-halo-4(5)-nitroimidazoles with S-nucleophiles also takes place under mild conditions. In the reaction of 2-halo-4(5)-nitro(4,5-dinitro)imidazoles **33** with potassium sulfide in water the imidazolinethiones **34** were obtained. If this reaction is conducted in methanol the diimidazolyl sulfides **35** are formed [32].



The thioether **38** was obtained by the reaction of 2-bromo-1-methyl-5-nitroimidazole **36** with the thiol **37** [13].

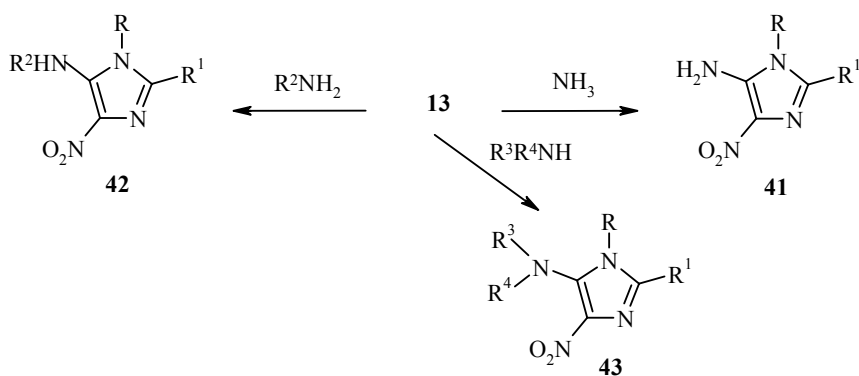


The reaction of 1-arylmethyl-2-bromo-4,5-diphenylimidazole **39** with thiourea leads to the imidazoline-2-thiones **40** – intermediates in the synthesis of derivatives of imidazo[2,1-*b*]thiazole [54].



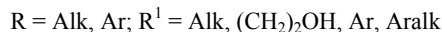
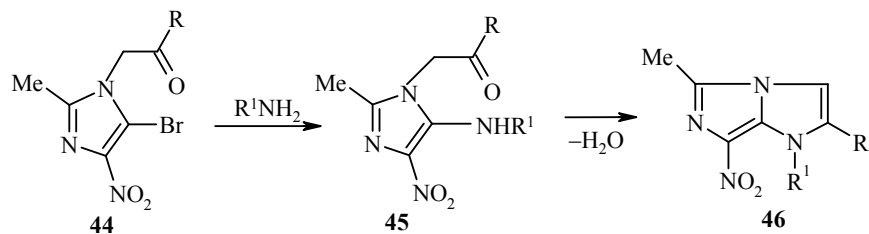
4. Reactions with N-Nucleophiles

5-Halo-4-nitroimidazoles **13** react with ammonia [55], primary [16-18, 21, 56] and secondary [14, 19, 56-58] amines, dialkylaminoalkylamines [16, 17, 20, 56], amino alcohols [19, 59], aminophenols [21], amino acids [60], and heterocyclic compounds containing a free NH group [20, 57]. A large series of 5-amino-4-nitroimidazole derivatives **41-43** were synthesized as a result of these reactions.

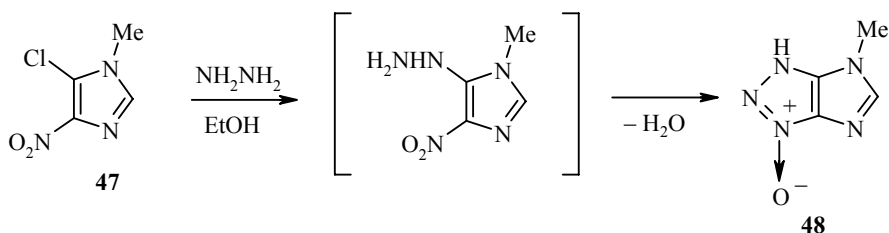


$\text{R} = \text{Alk}; \text{R}^1 = \text{H, Alk}; \text{R}^2 = \text{Alk, Ar, } (\text{CH}_2)_2\text{OH}; \text{R}^3 = \text{Alk};$
 $\text{R}^4 = \text{Alk}; \text{R}^3\text{R}^4\text{N} - \text{secondary acyclic or heterocyclic amine}$

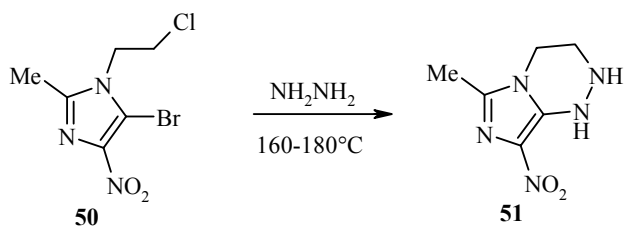
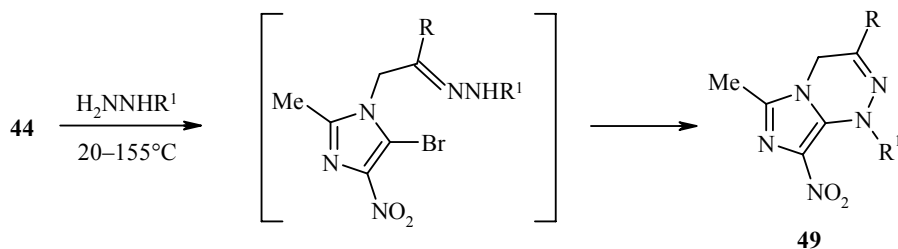
The reaction of 1-acylmethyl-5-bromo-2-methyl-4-nitroimidazoles **44** with amines leads to the formation of derivatives of imidazo[5,1-*a*]imidazole **46**. Under mild conditions it is possible to isolate the intermediate compounds **45** [61, 62].



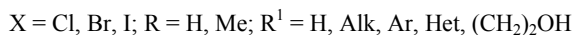
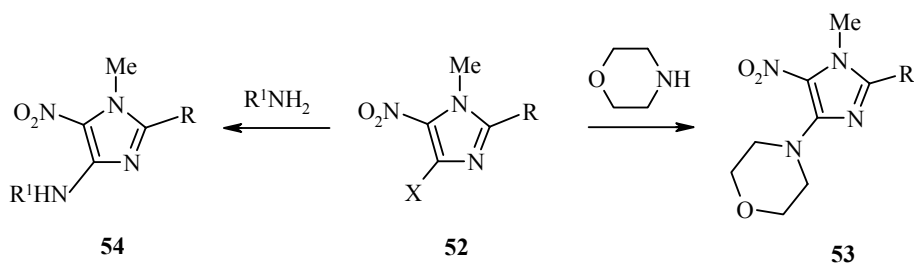
In the reaction of 5-chloro-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazole **47** with hydrazine hydrate 1-methylimidazo[4,5-*d*]triazole N-oxide **48** was obtained [63].



The reactions of 1-acylmethyl-5-bromo-2-methyl-4-nitroimidazoles **44** and 5-bromo-1-(2-chloroethyl)-2-methyl-4-nitroimidazole **50** with hydrazines lead to derivatives of imidazo[5,1-*c*]-1,2,4-triazine **49** and **51** [64, 65].

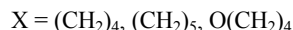
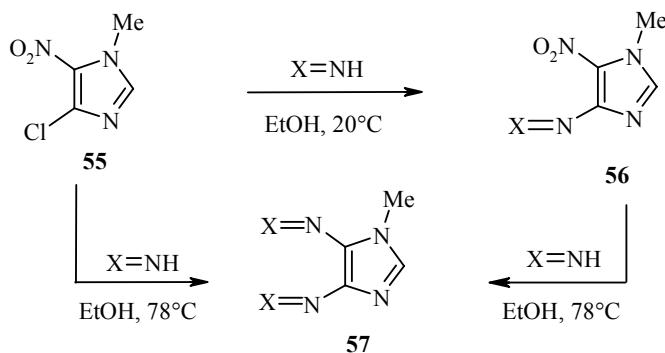


4-Halo-5-nitroimidazoles enter into reaction similarly with N-nucleophiles. The reactions of compounds **52** with ammonia [55], amines [14, 19, 22, 58], amino alcohols [19, 59], amino acids [60], and derivatives of imidazole with a free NH group [20, 59] have been described. As a result the substituted 4-amino-5-nitroimidazoles **53** and **54** were obtained.



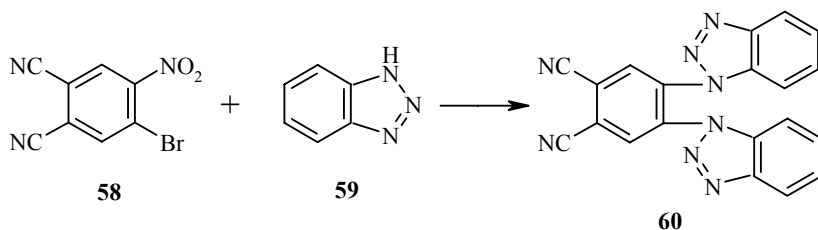
An unusual reaction with N-nucleophiles, during which not only the halogen atom but also the NO_2 group is substituted by the N-nucleophile fragment, was described in the series of halonitro derivatives of imidazole and 2,2'-diimidazole. Thus, 4,4',5,5'-tetraphenylamino-2,2'-diimidazole was obtained when 4,4'-dibromo-5,5'-dinitro-2,2'-diimidazole was boiled in aniline [66].

In the case of 4-chloro-1-methyl-5-nitroimidazole **55** the substitution of the chlorine atom and NO_2 group by fragments of secondary acyclic amines takes place at a lower temperature (78°C) [14]. As a result derivatives of the almost previously uninvestigated 4,5-diaminoimidazole **57** were obtained.

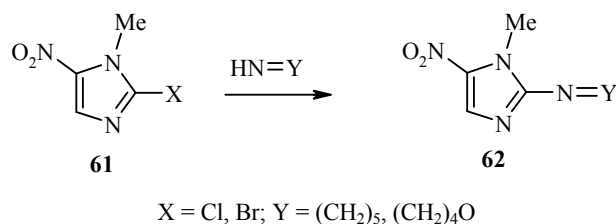


It should be noted that the isomeric compound 5-chloro-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazole **47** reacts with secondary amines at $130\text{--}132^\circ\text{C}$, and the reaction stops at the stage of substitution of the chlorine atom [56].

Recently it was shown that the substitution of the halogen atom and NO_2 group by the N-nucleophile fragment can also occur in the benzene series in the presence of strong electron-withdrawing groups such as CN in the molecule. Thus, 1,2-di(benzotriazolyl)-4,5-dicyanobenzene was obtained in the reaction of 1-bromo-4,5-dicyano-2-nitrobenzene **58** with benzotriazole **59** [67].

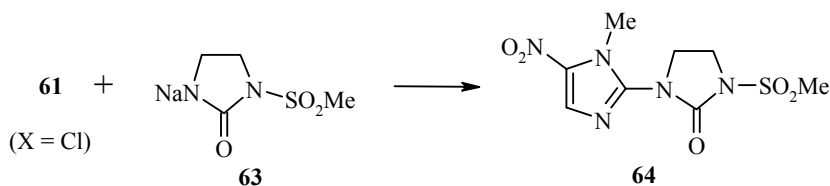


In [58, 68] the reactions of 2-halo-4(5)-nitroimidazoles with N-nucleophiles were described. Thus, during the reaction of 2-chloro(bromo)-1-methyl-5-nitroimidazoles **61** with secondary acyclic amines the corresponding 2-amino-substituted 5-nitroimidazoles **62** were obtained [58, 68].



The reaction of 2-chloro-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazole with morpholine takes place according to a similar scheme [58].

The diimidazole derivative **64** was synthesized during the reaction of compound **61** (X = Cl) with the sodium salt of imidazolidin-2-one **63** [58].

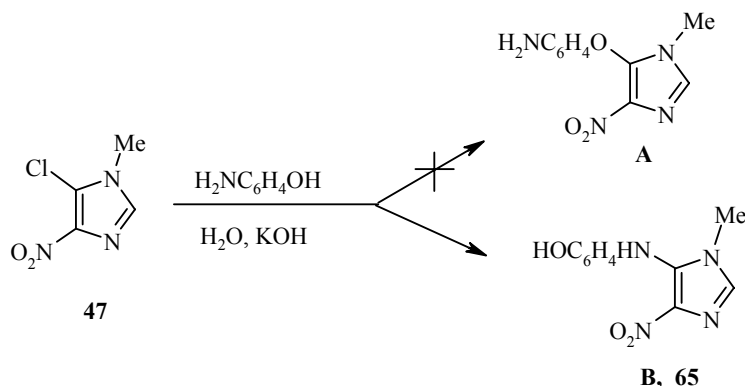


In [69] there is an extensive range of data on the use of spectral methods to establish the structure of isomeric 1-substituted 4-nitro- and 5-nitroimidazoles, including halonitroimidazoles.

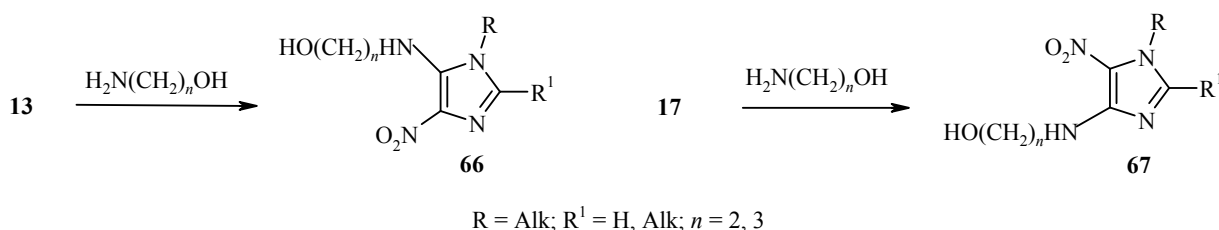
5. Reactions with Ambident N,O-Nucleophiles

Aminophenols and amino alcohols contain two nucleophilic centers. The reaction of 5-halo-4-nitroimidazoles with these nucleophiles can theoretically therefore take place at the OH and NH₂ groups, leading to the formation of ethers of 5-hydroxy-4-nitroimidazoles (structure **A**), N(5)-substituted 5-amino-4-nitroimidazoles (structure **B**), or their mixture.

In actual fact the reaction of 5-chloro-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazole **47** with 2-, 3-, and 4-aminophenols in an aqueous solution of potassium hydroxide takes place at the more nucleophilic center of the molecule—the NH₂ group, and 5-(hydroxyphenylamino)-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazoles **65** (structure **B**) are formed [21].



5-Halo-4-nitro- and 4-halo-5-nitroimidazoles **13** and **17** react similarly with amino alcohols, leading to the formation of the corresponding 5-(hydroxyalkylamino)-4-nitro- and 4-(hydroxyalkylamino)-5-nitroimidazoles **66** and **67** [19, 59].

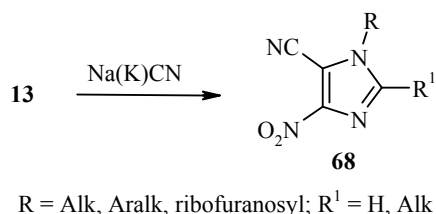


6. Reactions with C-Nucleophiles

The position of the NO_2 group in the molecule of the halonitroimidazoles determines the different behaviors of these compounds toward the cyanides of alkali metals.

The reaction of 5-halo-4-nitroimidazoles **13** with potassium or sodium cyanide in lower alcohols in the presence of the iodides of these metals as catalysts leads to high yields of 5-cyano-4-nitroimidazoles **68** [12, 18, 19, 22, 26, 43, 70-76]. In DMSO this reaction takes place in the absence of the catalyst [12, 73].

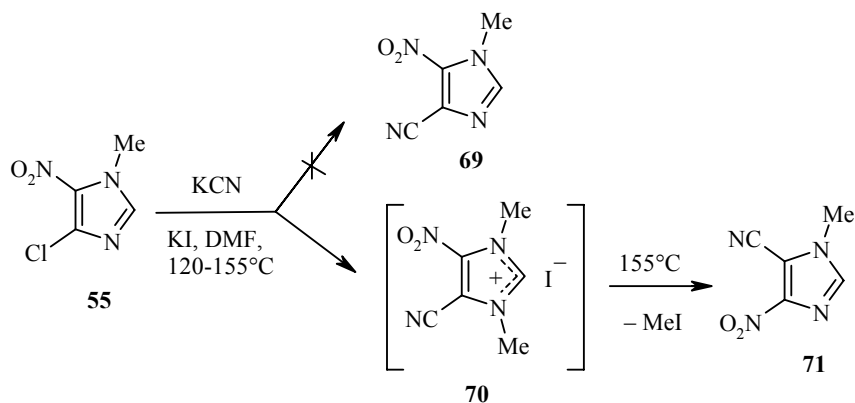
Compounds **68** have found use in the synthesis of purine derivatives [77-80].

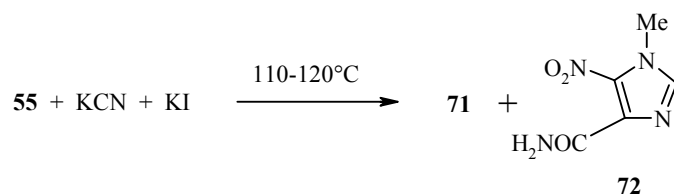


Exceptions were 4(5)-bromo-5(4)-nitro-, 2,4(5)-dibromo-5(4)-nitro-, and 1-benzyl-2,5-dibromo-4-nitroimidazoles, which according to data in [43] do not react with KCN in the presence of KI when heated in methanol. In our opinion a higher temperature is required for these reactions.

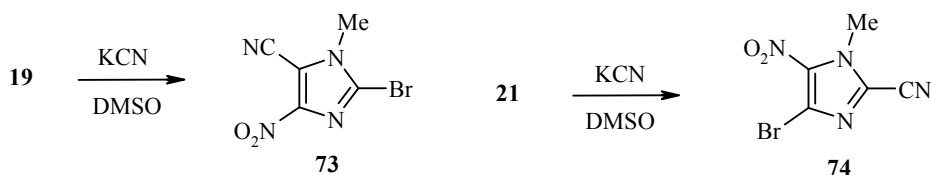
4-Chloro(bromo)-5-nitroimidazoles behave unusually in reaction with potassium cyanide. The reaction does not occur on heating in lower alcohols [18, 19, 22, 43, 70, 71]. In DMF at 120-155°C the isomer 5-cyano-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazole **71** (yield 52%) was formed instead of the expected 4-cyano-1-methyl-5-nitroimidazole **69** [70, 71].

The mechanism of this rearrangement was not established. The authors of [19] suggest that the formation of the quaternary salt **70** is possible in DMF and that its thermal decomposition leads to the formation of **71**. However, such a description of the reaction mechanism does not explain the formation also of 1-methyl-5-nitroimidazole-4-carboxamide **72** (albeit with very small yields) together with compound **71** when chloronitroimidazole **55** is heated at 110-120°C with a mixture of potassium cyanide and iodide in the absence of DMF [70].

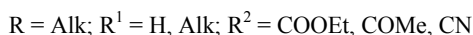
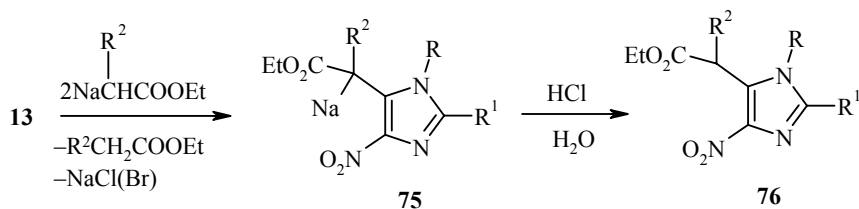




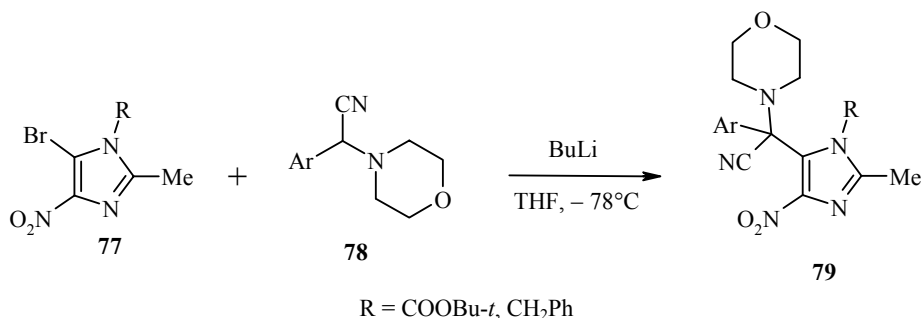
The reactions of 2,5-dibromo-1-methyl-4-nitroimidazole **19** and its 5-nitro isomer **21** with KCN in DMSO in the presence of 18-crown-6 ether take place in different ways. As in the case of sodium methoxide, during the reaction of the 4-nitro isomer **19** the bromine atom at position 5 of the imidazole ring is substituted, and 5-cyano-4-nitroimidazole **73** is formed. 2-Cyano-5-nitroimidazole **74** was obtained from the 5-nitro isomer **21** under the same conditions [12].



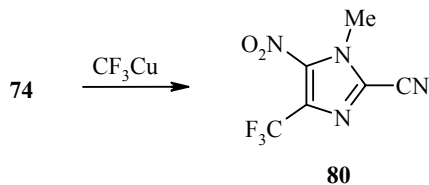
The reaction of 5-halo-4-nitroimidazoles **13** with the sodium salts of CH acids leads to the formation of 4-nitro-5-imidazolyl CH acids **76** [81].



As a result of the reaction of 5-bromo-4-nitroimidazoles **77** with α -arylmorpholylacetonitriles **78** in THF in the presence of butyllithium the corresponding nitriles **79** were obtained [82].



The reaction of 4-bromo-5-nitroimidazole **74** with trifluoromethylcopper, resulting in the synthesis of 2-cyano-1-methyl-5-nitro-4-trifluoromethylimidazole **80**, was described in [12].



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