

ELECTROCHEMISTRY OF 7-CARBOETHOXYCYCLOHEPTATRIENE AND ITS AZA-ANALOGUES : RING CONTRUCTION OF AZEPINE DERIVATIVES TO ANILINE DERIVATIVES BY OXIDATION AND N-N BOND RUPTURE OF DIAZEPINE DERIVATIVES TO 1-AMINO-4-CYANO-1,3-BUTADIENE DERIVATIVES BY REDUCTION

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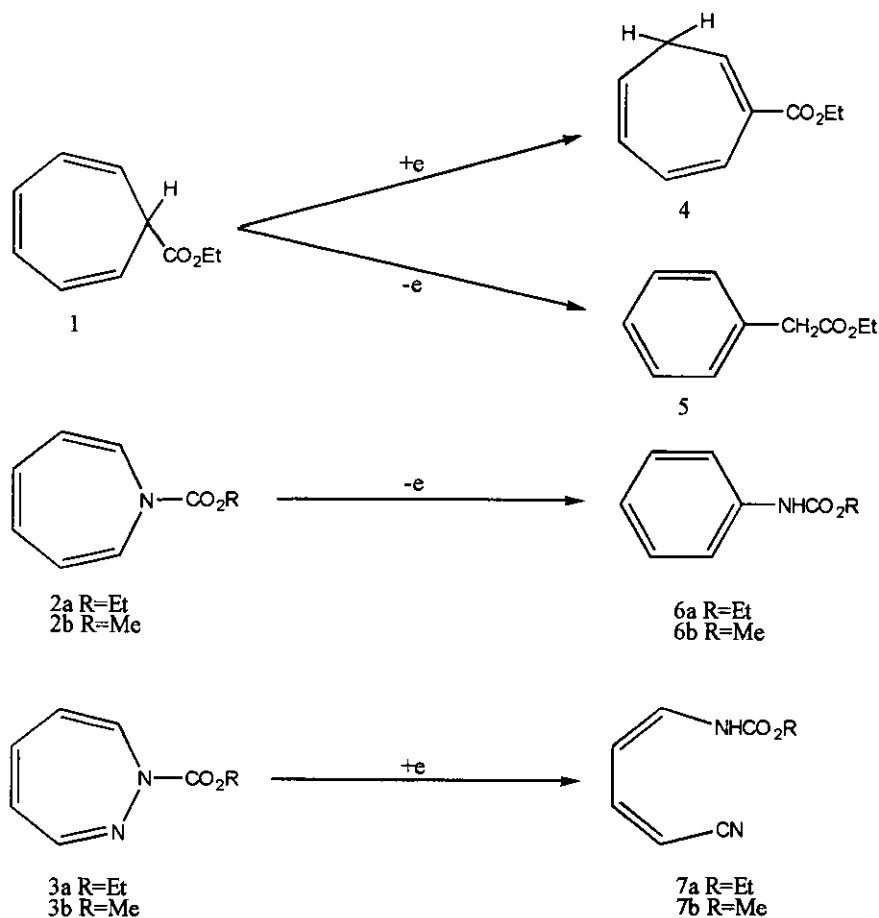
Abstract—Electrochemical reduction or oxidation of 7-ethoxycarbonylcycloheptatriene afforded 2-ethoxycarbonylcycloheptatriene and ethyl phenylacetate, respectively. *N*-Alkoxy carbonyl-1*H*-azepine formed *N*-alkoxy carbonylaniline in electrochemical oxidation *via* a ring contraction. *N*-Alkoxy carbonyl-1*H*-1,2-diazepine afforded *N*-Alkoxy carbonyl-1-amino-4-cyano-1,3-butadiene in electrochemical reduction *via* an N-N bond fission.

Electrochemistry is useful not only for syntheses but also for investigations of reactivities of organic compounds. One of the merit of the electrochemical reaction is a possibility of an optional setting either in oxidation or reduction of the voltages of the electric potentials.¹

Cyclohepta-1,3,5-triene derivatives are known to isomerize to bicyclo[4.1.0]hepta-2,4-diene derivatives or to form stable 6π -electrons aromatic systems, tropylium ion derivatives.² 1*H*-Azepine and 1*H*-1,2-diazepine derivatives are considered to be cyclic polyolefins with partial enamine-type reactivities rather than 8π -electrons anti-aromatic compounds. Their reactivities in thermal and photochemical reaction conditions³ or their reactions with organometallic compounds have been researched extensively.⁴ However, to our knowledge, it is hard to find any example in which azepine or diazepine derivatives have been a target for electrochemical reactions. As a series of our research on the reactivities of azepine and diazepine derivatives, we investigated the electrochemical reactions of 1*H*-azepine and 1*H*-1,2-diazepine derivatives. Here the results are reported. (Scheme 1)

A solution of 7-ethoxycarbonylcyclohepta-1,3,5-triene (1) in anhydrous acetonitrile was electrochemically reduced in the presence of tetrabutylammonium perchlorate (TBAP) as a supporting electrolyte with a platinum gauze as an anode and a platinum wire as a cathode at -1.4 V vs. Ag/Ag^+ at 0°C under a nitrogen stream. After evaporation of the solvent the reaction mixture was column followed by thin layer chromatographed on silica gel to give 2-ethoxycarbonylcyclohepta-1,3,5-triene (4)⁵ in 36 % yield. The current efficiency was 60 %. On the other hand, 1 resisted to electrochemical oxidation and finally gave a low yield (5 %) of ethyl phenylacetate (5) at $+2.0$ V vs. Ag/Ag^+ through a current efficiency of 3 %.

Electrochemical reduction of *N*-ethoxycarbonyl- (2a) and *N*-methoxycarbonyl-1*H*-azepine (2b) at the analogous reaction conditions as above but under variable voltages resulted in a formation of an intractable complicated mixture. However, electrochemical oxidation of 2a and 2b at $+2.0$ V vs. Ag/Ag^+ afforded fairly good yields of *N*-ethoxycarbonyl- (6a) and *N*-methoxycarbonylaniline derivative (6b) in 62 % and 79 % yields, respectively.⁶ The current efficiencies were 25 % and 40 %, respectively.

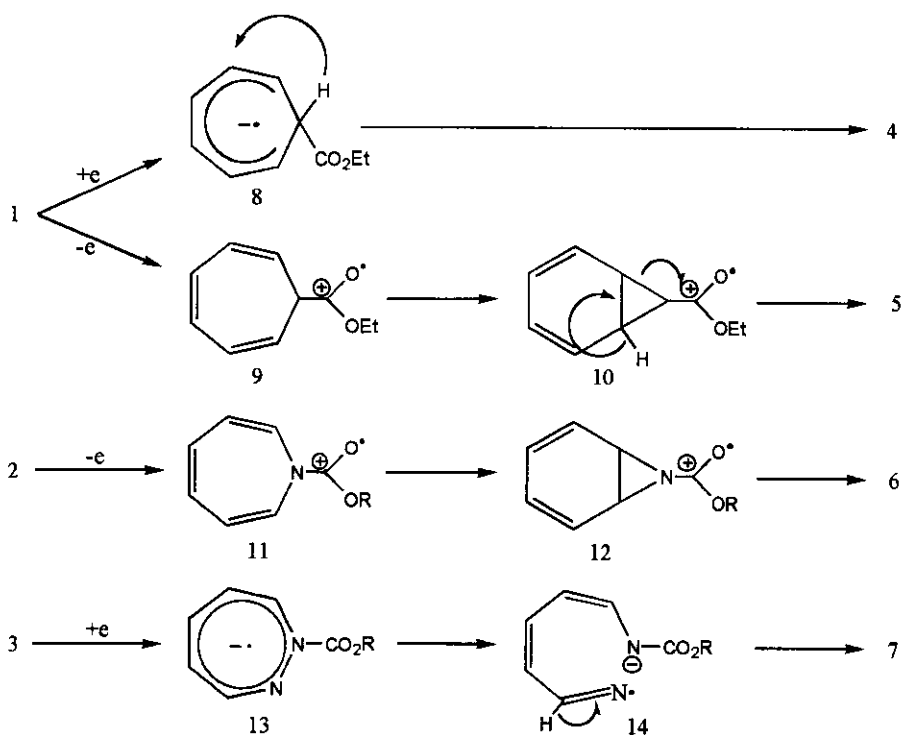


Scheme 1

N-Ethoxycarbonyl- (3a) and *N*-methoxycarbonyl-1*H*-1,2-diazepine (3b) were electrochemically reduced at -1.4 V vs. Ag/Ag^+ to give *N*-ethoxycarbonyl- (7a) and *N*-methoxycarbonyl-1-amino-4-cyano-1,3-butadiene (7b)⁴ in 56 % (current efficiency 44 %) and 58 % (54 %) yields, respectively.

The reaction mechanism of the electrochemical reduction of 1 is considered to be analogous to that of 1,3-hydrogen migration of 7-cyanocyclohepta-1,3,5-triene under basic conditions reported by Takahashi and her coworkers.⁵ (Scheme 2) One electron reduction of 1 generates a radical anion (8), in which the hydrogen at the 7-position migrates to the 2-position. The preferential occurrence of the 1,3-migration is attributable to the co-planarity of the three carbon atoms at 1, 2, and 7-positions, which are concerning in the present hydrogen migration.⁵

The formation of ethyl phenylacetate (5) can be explained as follows. One electron release from the carbonyl group of 1 forms a ketyl-type cation radical (9). It is well known that the isomerization between a cycloheptatriene system (9) and a bicyclo[4.1.0]heptadiene system (10) favors to the later when the substituent is electron-withdrawing.⁷ Thus, 1 becomes to be easy to isomerize to the bicyclic system (10) by electrochemical oxidation. An aromatization of 10 employing a proton elimination followed by an extraction of proton radical from solvent can form 5.



Scheme 2

The reaction mechanism of azepine derivatives (2) is considered to be as analogous to that of the formation of 5. (Scheme 2) One electron oxidation of 2 generates a cation radical (11), which tautomerizes to 12, and finally aromatizes to the aniline derivative (6). Reported transformation of 2 to 6 in acidic media well support this mechanism.⁸ An electrochemical reduction of 3 can be explained to proceed as follows. One electron transfer to 3 forms an anion radical (13), which ruptures the N-N bond to form an imino radical-type anion radical (14), which then generates the cyano compound (7) through a proton radical elimination followed by a proton extraction from solvent. This mechanism is essentially same as those of a formation of 7 from 3 by reactions with bases or with appropriate metals.⁹

The failure of 2 and 3 in electrochemical reduction to form the hydrogen migrating products of the type 4 is apparently attributable to the lack of the corresponding hydrogen (7-position hydrogen in 1) in 2 and 3, which should migrate.¹⁰

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are indebted to Dr. Kazuaki Ito of Yamagata University for his fruitful suggestions.

EXPERIMENTAL

The working electrode was a combination of a platinum gauze of a size 5 cm depth and 12 cm width and a platinum wire, which were separated each other by means of a medium-porosity sintered glass frit. The reference electrode was a silver wire. The controlled potential power was supplied from a Yanaco Potentio/Galvanostatic Electrolyser VE-9 apparatus. Acetonitrile was distilled from calcium hydride and used immediately. Wakogel C-200 and Wakogel B5-F were used for column and thin layer chromatographies, respectively.

Typical reactions are mentioned below.

Electrochemical Reduction of 7-Ethoxycarbonyl-1,3,5-cycloheptatriene (1). A solution of 1 (151 mg, 0.92 mmol) and TBAP (1.57 g, 4.60 mmol) in anhydrous acetonitrile (100 mL) was electrolyzed at -1.4 V vs. Ag/Ag⁺ at 0°C under a nitrogen stream for 20 min. 52.8 Coulomb of electricity was passed. After evaporation of the solvent, the reaction mixture was column chromatographed on silica gel with an eluent of hexane-ethyl acetate (19:1) to give a colorless oil, which was further purified by thin layer chromatography on silica gel with a developing solvent of hexane-ethyl acetate (19:1) to give 4 (54 mg, 35.8 %, $R_f=0.60$, current efficiency 82.2 %).

Electrochemical Oxidation of 7-Ethoxycarbonyl-1,3,5-cycloheptatriene (1). A solution of

1 (512 mg, 3.12 mmol) and TBAP (6.93 g, 0.20 mmol) in anhydrous acetonitrile (200 mL) was electrolyzed at +2.0 V vs. Ag/Ag⁺ at 0°C under a nitrogen stream. 194 Coulomb of electricity was passed. After evaporation of the solvent, the reaction mixture was column chromatographed on silica gel with an eluent of hexane-ethyl acetate (19:1) to give a colorless oil, which was further purified by thin layer chromatography on silica gel with a developing solvent of hexane-ethyl acetate (19:1) to give 5 (14.9 mg, 2.9 %, $R_f=0.55$, current efficiency 15.5 %).

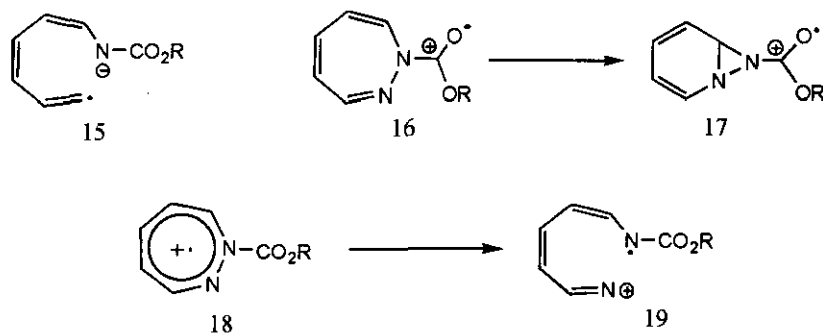
Electrochemical Oxidation of N-Ethoxycarbonyl-1H-azepine (2a). A solution of 2a (471 mg, 3.12 mmol) and TBAP (6.93 g, 20.3 mmol) in anhydrous acetonitrile (200 mL) was electrolyzed at +2.0 V vs. Ag/Ag⁺ at 0°C under a nitrogen stream. 546 Coulomb of electricity was passed. After evaporation of the solvent, the reaction mixture was column chromatographed on silica gel with an eluent of hexane-ethyl acetate (4:1) to give a yellow oil, which was further purified by thin layer chromatography on silica gel with a developing solvent of hexane-ethyl acetate (3:1) to give 6 (336 mg, 71.3 %, $R_f=0.50$, current efficiency 39.2 %).

Electrochemical Reduction of N-Ethoxycarbonyl-1H-1,2-diazepine (3a). A solution of 3a (140 mg, 0.92 mmol) and TBAP (1.59 g, 4.65 mmol) in anhydrous acetonitrile (100 mL) was electrolyzed at -1.4 V vs. Ag/Ag⁺ at 0°C under a nitrogen stream. 68.9 Coulomb of electricity was passed. After evaporation of the solvent, the reaction mixture was column chromatographed on silica gel with an eluent of hexane-ethyl acetate (3:2) to give colorless crystals, which were further purified by thin layer chromatography on silica gel with a developing solvent of hexane-ethyl acetate (3:7) to give 7 (59 mg, 42.2 %, $R_f=0.50$, current efficiency 54.3 %).

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10. A formation of the complicated mixture in electrochemical reduction of 2 may be explained by the instability of the vinyl radical-type anion radical (15), which is expected to be formed by reduction of 2. A decomposition or a polymerization of 15 can form the complicated mixture.



Scheme 3

One electron oxidation of 3 can form two kinds of cations. An electron removal from the carbonyl group generates a cation (16) and a removal from the system of the ring part form a conjugated cation (18). If the same type of a valence isomerization as those of 9 takes a place in 16, a diaziridine-type cation (17) may be generated. An instability of 17 due to the aziridine-structure can be a reason of the formation of the complicated mixture by decomposition.

An N-N bond fission in 18 generates 19. Removal of proton to form a cyano group and a catch of hydrogen from an appropriate source can form 7.

A failure to form 7 in the electrochemical oxidation of 3 may show that 18 should not be formed or it is too unstable to form 19 *via* the N-N bond rupture course.

Received, 5th January, 1998