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Journal:	<i>Photochemical & Photobiological Sciences</i>
Manuscript ID	PP-ART-03-2019-000113.R1
Article Type:	Paper
Date Submitted by the Author:	22-Apr-2019
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ARTICLE

The Photoisomerization of *cis,trans*-1,2-Dideuterio-1,4-diphenyl-1,3-butadiene in Solution. No Bicycle-Pedal†

Received 00th January 20xx,
Accepted 00th January 20xx

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DOI: 10.1039/x0xx00000x

cis,trans-1,2-Dideuterio-1,4-diphenyl-1,3-butadiene (*ct*-DPB_{d2}) was synthesized and its *cis-trans* photoisomerization in cyclohexane-*d*₁₂ (C₆D₁₂) at room temperature was monitored by ¹H NMR spectroscopy. The results reveal formation of only *trans,trans*-1,2-dideuterio-1,4-diphenyl-1,3-butadiene (*tt*-DPB_{d2}). The failure to detect formation of *trans,cis*-1,2-dideuterio-1,4-diphenyl-1,3-butadiene (*tc*-DPB_{d2}) eliminates the possibility that an identity bicycle pedal process contributes to inefficiency in the *cis-trans* photoisomerization of *cis,trans*-1,4-diphenyl-1,3-butadiene (*ct*-DPB).

Introduction

Previous studies have shown that, in contrast to *trans*-stilbene,¹⁻⁷ the *trans-cis* photoisomerization and fluorescence of *trans,trans*-1,4-diphenyl-1,3-butadiene (*tt*-DPB) are not the sole complementary processes.⁸⁻¹¹ In several solvents fluorescence and photoisomerization quantum yields of *tt*-DPB do not account for all excited state decay and it has been suggested that solvent dependent access to the 2 ¹A_g state leads to unreactive radiationless decay.¹⁰ The low photoisomerization quantum yields of the other two DPB isomers, that are essentially non-fluorescent in solution, must also be explained. It was shown recently that the photoisomerization of *cc*-DPB occurs exclusively by simultaneous two-bond rotation in the solid state,^{12,13} and partially so, in glassy media at 77 K.^{14,15} The two bond bicycle-pedal (BP) mechanism was first proposed by Warshel to account for photoisomerization of polyenes in free volume constraining media such as the protein environments of the rhodopsins.¹⁶ The interconversions of *trans,cis,trans*- and *cis,trans,trans*-1,6-diphenyl-1,3,5-hexatriene^{17,18} and *cc*-DPB and *tt*-DPB are examples of one photon/two bond photoisomerizations in solution.^{10,11} More intriguing is the recent demonstration that the central bond photoisomerizations of *trans,cis,trans*- and *trans,trans,trans*-1,6-dideuterio-1,3,5-hexatriene in solution occur primarily by a concerted BP process.¹⁹ The BP process would be an identity reaction in *ct*-DPB and it occurred to us that it might account for some of the inefficiency in its *cis-trans* photoisomerization.

In this paper, we describe the synthesis and photoisomerization of *ct*-DPB_{d2}. The results presented here establish that the BP process plays no role in the photoisomerization of *ct*-DPB in solution.

Experimental

Materials

Cyclohexane-*d*₁₂, benzene-*d*₆, chloroform-*d*₁ (Cambridge Isotope Labs) and hexanes (HPLC grade, EMD) were used as received. Silica was (Technical Grade, 230-400 mesh, 43-60 μm, Sigma-Aldrich). The photoisomerization of *tt*-DPB yielded *ct*-DPB as previously described.^{9,10} The synthesis of *ct*-DPB_{d2} using the Horner-Wadsworth-Emmons reaction²⁰ follows. **Diethyl benzylphosphonate:** Benzyl bromide (2.86 g, 2.0 mL, 16.7 mmol, Sigma Aldrich) and triethyl phosphite (9.69 g, 10.0 mL, 58.3 mmol, Sigma Aldrich) were taken in a 100 mL single necked round bottom flask and refluxed in an oil bath. The progress of the reaction was monitored by TLC using hexane as eluent, and the reaction was stopped after 3 h (TLC showed complete loss of benzyl bromide). Excess triethyl phosphite was distilled off under reduced pressure and the reaction mixture was cooled and extracted with ethyl acetate and 0.1 M sodium bicarbonate (3 x 25 mL). The organic layer was collected, dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated to yield 3.5 g (92%) of diethyl benzylphosphonate, a pale yellow oil. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 500 MHz): δ 1.18 – 1.21 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 6H), 3.09 – 3.13 (d, 2H), 3.94 – 3.99 (m, 4H), 7.21 – 7.27 (m, 5H). ***trans*-1,4-Diphenyl-1-buten-3-yne:** Diethyl benzylphosphonate (1.0 g, 4.4 mmol) in THF (5.0 mL, freshly distilled over Na-benzophenone) was added dropwise to a stirred suspension of NaH (360.0 mg, 9 mmol, 60% in mineral oil, Sigma) in THF (10.0 mL) taken in an oven dried, N₂ flushed round bottom flask kept in dry ice. The reaction mixture was stirred for 30 minutes under N₂ flushed conditions at low temperature followed by the dropwise addition of a solution of 3-phenylpropanal (572.0

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†This paper is dedicated to the memory of Professor Ugo Mazzucato and his seminal contributions to Photochemistry.

mg, 540 μ L, 4.4 mmol, Aldrich) in THF (5.0 mL). After stirring the reaction mixture for 1 h maintaining the cold conditions, the temperature was slowly raised to room temperature and the solution was refluxed for

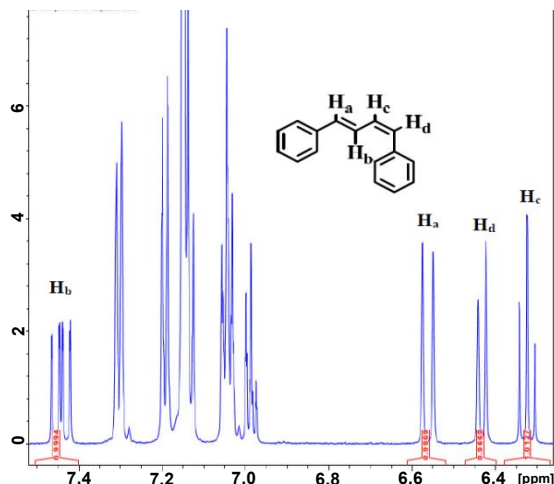


Fig. 1 The ^1H NMR spectrum of *ct*-DPB in C_6D_6 . Integration values from left to right: 0.9994, 0.9869, 0.9660 and 1.0127.

24 h (the reaction mixture turned deep red and TLC showed loss of the aldehyde). The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and a few drops of brine were added to quench excess NaH. It was then extracted with dichloromethane and brine (3 x 20 mL). The organic layer was collected, dried over Na_2SO_4 and concentrated. The product was then purified by column chromatography over silica gel using hexane as eluent. White powder, yield = 200.0 mg (22%). ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): δ 6.38 – 6.41 (d, J = 16.25 Hz, 1H), 7.03 – 7.07 (d, J = 16.25 Hz, 1H), 7.29 – 7.37 (m, 6H), 7.42 – 7.44 (m, 2H), 7.47 – 7.49 (m, 2H). ^1H NMR showed the presence of \sim 10% *cis*-enyne. The doublets due to the *cis* protons were observed at δ 5.92 – 5.95 (J = 11.95 Hz) and 6.70 – 6.73 (J = 11.95 Hz). This isomer mixture was used for the reduction reaction. ***cis,trans*-1,2-Dideuterio-1,4-diphenylbutadiene**: The enyne mixture (100.0 mg, 0.49 mmol) was dissolved in methanol (10.0 mL) in a single-necked round bottom flask and flushed with D_2 (D_2 filled balloon connected to the rubber septum on the RB flask using a needle) for 10 min. Lindlar Pd (5% Pd/C- CaCO_3 - PbO_2 , 10.0 mg, Sigma) was added to the solution and stirred under a D_2 atmosphere. The reaction was terminated after 90 min based on TLC analysis. The reaction mixture was passed through a short plug of silica gel to remove the catalyst and the methanol solution was concentrated. Products were isolated by column chromatography over silica gel using hexane. Two pure fractions were isolated from the column and the ^1H NMR analysis showed that the first fraction (yield = 5.0 mg, 5%) was the *cis,cis*-isomer (J = 11.55 Hz) and the second fraction (yield = 53.0 mg, 52%) was the *cis,trans*-isomer (J = 15.55 Hz). The third fraction was unreacted starting material. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 500 MHz): *cc*-DPB $_{d_2}$: δ 6.58 – 6.60 (d, J = 11.55 Hz, 1H), 6.71 – 6.74 (d, J = 11.55 Hz, 1H), 7.26 – 7.29 (m, 2H), 7.36 – 7.43 (m, 8H). *ct*-DPB $_{d_2}$: δ 6.71 – 6.74 (d, J = 15.55 Hz, 1H), 7.17 – 7.42 (m, 11 H).

Measurements

Samples were irradiated in degassed 5 mm o.d. precision quartz NMR sample tubes (Wilmad Low Pressure/Vacuum Valve (LPV) 7" L, 500 MHz) and the progress of the reaction was followed by ^1H NMR with the use of a Bruker Avance III 500 MHz NMR spectrometer. The NMR

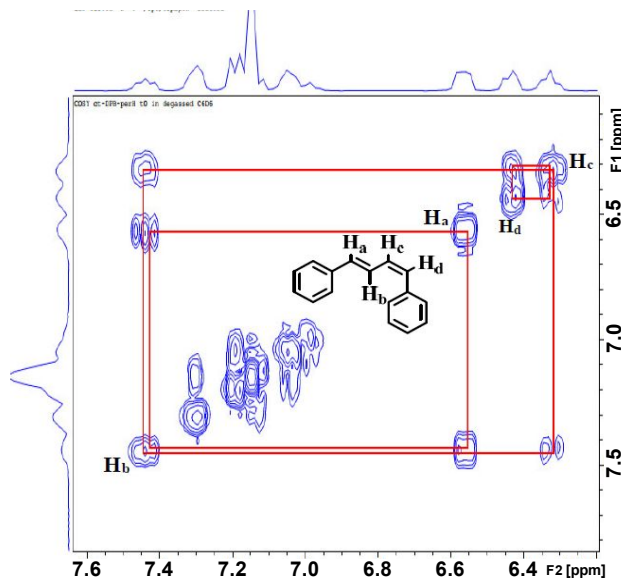


Fig. 2 The COSY spectrum of *ct*-DPB in C_6D_6 .

tubes were placed in a small cylindrical merry-go-round attached to a stirring motor,²¹ fitted to accept 5 mm tubes. The merry-go-round was placed as close as possible to the center arc of a Hanovia 450 W medium pressure Hg lamp housed in a double walled Pyrex probe. Cold water was circulated through the inner compartment of the probe and a 313 nm aqueous filter solution²² was in the outer compartment.

Sample preparation

Freshly purified *ct*-DPB and *ct*-DPB $_{d_2}$ decompose on standing in the dark in the refrigerator. Two ^1H NMR peaks that develop close to δ 10 indicate that photooxidation to aldehydes is in part to blame. Accordingly, the DPB samples used in our experiment were not completely free of minor contaminants. Solutions of *ct*-DPB (3×10^{-2} M) and *ct*-DPB- d_2 (4.5×10^{-2} M) were prepared in benzene- d_6 and cyclohexane- d_{12} , respectively. They were degassed using 5 freeze pump thaw cycles to 1×10^{-4} Torr. *tt*-DPB contamination in the 0-time ^1H NMR spectra was significantly less than 1% (see below). The degassed samples were irradiated in open air to \sim 1 and 2% conversion.

Results

^1H NMR spectra

The ^1H NMR spectrum of *ct*-DPB in the degassed benzene- d_6 solution was assigned using 1D proton and 2D COSY spectra, Figs. 1 and 2 respectively. Protons H_a - H_d integrate very close to 1 H each. H_a and H_d doublets have coupling constants of 15 and 12 Hz, respectively, consistent with *trans* and *cis* coupling, Fig. 1. Single

cross peaks reveal correlation between H_a and H_b , and between H_c and H_d , Fig. 2.

Coupling between H_b and H_c leads to a pair of off-diagonal peaks for those two protons. The only vinyl protons in the ^1H NMR spectrum of $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ in degassed C_6D_{12} , Fig. 3, are H_a and H_b . The H_b doublet of $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ in C_6D_{12} overlaps the signals of the aromatic protons, being significantly up field from the corresponding signal of $ct\text{-DPB}$ in C_6D_6 , Fig. 1. The H_b signals at the downfield edge of the aromatic protons are readily seen in the COSY spectrum of $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$, Fig. 4.

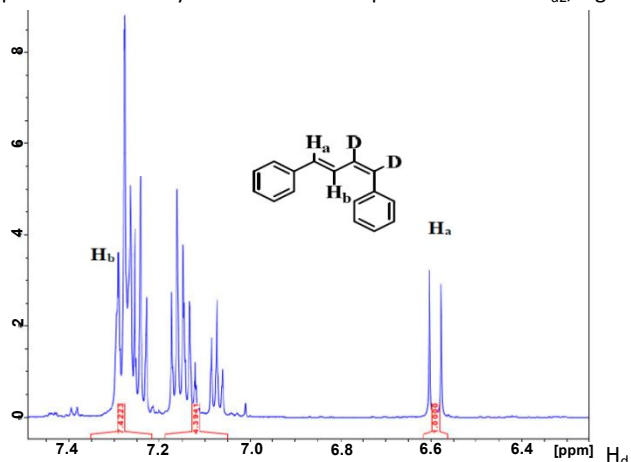


Fig. 3 The ^1H NMR spectrum of $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ in C_6D_{12} . Integration values from left to right: 7.422, 4.394 and 1.000

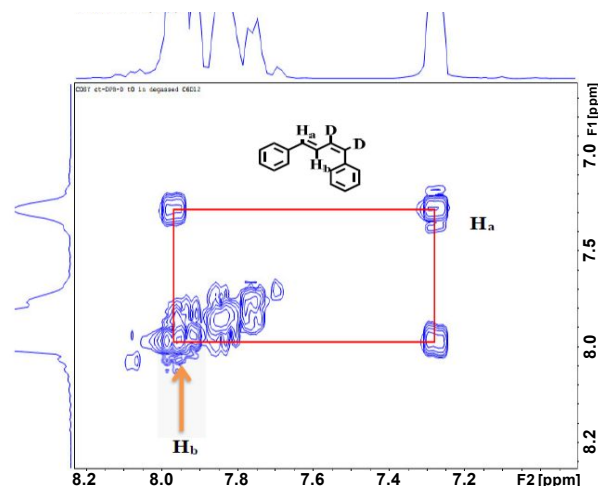


Fig. 4 The COSY spectrum of $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ in C_6D_{12} .

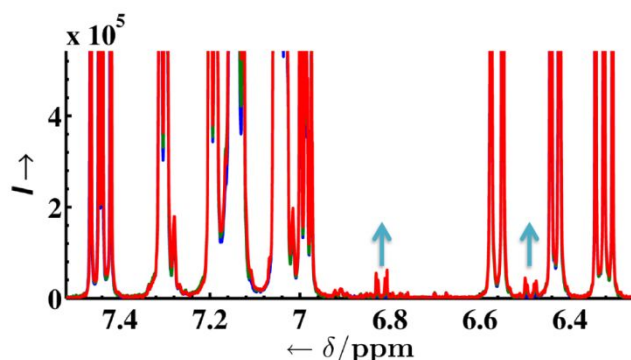


Fig. 5 Irradiation of $ct\text{-DPB}$ in C_6D_6 ; the arrows show $tt\text{-DPB}$ formation.

^1H NMR spectra of irradiated $ct\text{-DPB}$ and $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$

The 0-time ^1H NMR spectra of the $ct\text{-DPB}$ and $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ solutions are shown in Figs. 1 and 3, respectively. Spectra were also recorded following 313 nm irradiation in parallel, in the small merry-go-round to about 1 and 2% conversions. The $ct\text{-DPB}$ spectra show the growth of two doublets of doublets, one centred at δ 6.48₃ and the other at δ 6.81₉ with a coupling constant of 15 Hz, consistent with the vinyl

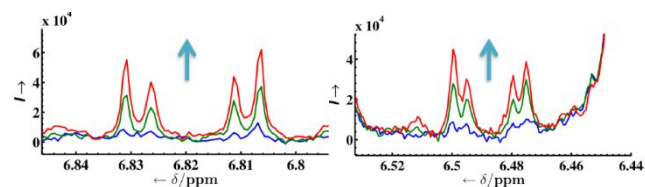


Fig. 6 Expanded regions from Fig. 5 showing the $tt\text{-DPB}$ vinyl protons.

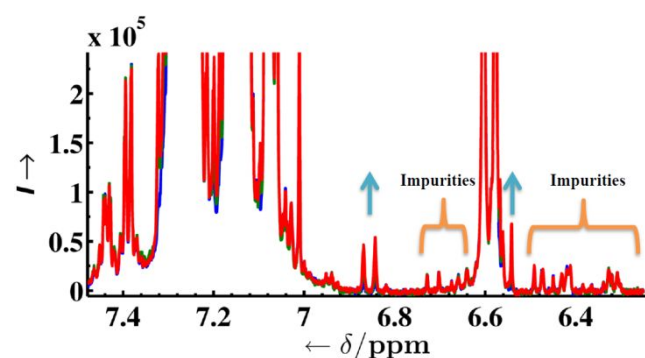


Fig. 7 Irradiation of $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ in C_6D_{12} ; the arrows show $tt\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ formation.

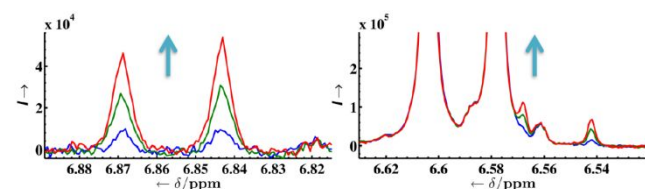


Fig. 8 Expanded regions from Fig. 7 showing the $tt\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ vinyl protons.

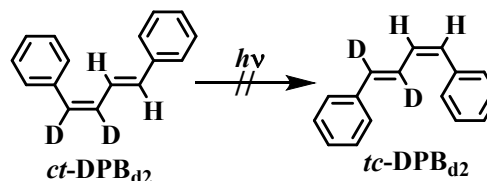
protons of $tt\text{-DPB}$, the expected photoproduct, Figs. 5 and 6. Corresponding spectra for $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ are shown in Figs. 7 and 8. That the H_a and H_b protons of the $tt\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ photoproduct emerge with equal intensity is evident in Fig. 7. The reader should not be deceived by Fig. 8 where the expansions of the H_a and H_b regions differ. Peaks of unknown minor contaminants that developed in the purified $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$ samples on storage in the refrigerator are marked as impurities. The amplitudes of those peaks did not change on irradiation. Cosy spectra for the $tt\text{-DPB}$ photoproduct regions are shown in Figs. 9 and 10 starting from $ct\text{-DPB}$ and $ct\text{-DPB}_{d2}$, respectively.

Discussion

Zechmeister and coworkers established long ago that the DPBs undergo mainly one photon/one bond photoisomerization in hexane.^{23,24} Minor two bond photoisomerization pathways were revealed by the more sensitive GC analysis in the $tt\text{-DPB}$

→ *cc*-DPB direction in hexane ($\phi_{t \rightarrow cc} = 0.002$)^{10,11} and in both the *tt*-DPB → *cc*-DPB ($\phi_{t \rightarrow cc} = 0.004$)¹¹ and the *cc*-DPB → *tt*-DPB ($\phi_{cc \rightarrow tt} = 0.03$)¹¹ directions in ethanol. Furthermore, ether formation via trapping of twisted allylmethylene zwitterionic intermediates established that the *tt*-DPB → *cc*-DPB photoreaction in ethanol occurs by the sequential two-step mechanism shown in Scheme 1 and not by a concerted BP process. Involvement of zwitterionic intermediates has not been established in nonpolar, non-hydroxylic solvents. Starting

Scheme 2. No *tc*-DPB_{d2} BP photoproduct from *ct*-DPB_{d2}.



bond. The *cis* vinyl protons of *tc*-DPB_{d2} would be observed at δ 6.35–6.45 if the BP process contributed to ¹*ct*-DPB* decay. The fact that that region is unchanged establishes the absence of the BP photoproduct under conditions that allow conversion to *tt*-DPB_{d2}, Fig. 7, to be easily observed. It is reasonable to expect that decay of the *cis*-phenallylmethylene intermediate in Scheme 1 would give similar amounts of *cc*- and *tc*-DPB. The $\phi_{t \rightarrow cc}$ value is not known in cyclohexane, but if we use the quantum yield ratio in ethanol¹¹ as a guide and assume $\phi_{t \rightarrow tc} \approx \phi_{t \rightarrow cc}$ then the yield of *tc*-DPB_{d2} would be too small to detect in our experiment.

Conclusions

We showed that the BP process does not play a significant role in the photochemistry of *ct*-DPB. Assuming that the decays of the phenallylmethylene intermediates in Scheme 1 give *cis* and *trans* double bonds with equal probability, the fraction of ¹*ct*-DPB* that avoid torsional relaxation by undergoing radiationless decay directly to the *ct*-DPB ground state can be estimated from $\phi_c = 1 - 2\phi_{t \rightarrow tt}$, where ϕ_c is the quantum yield of internal conversion. Values of ϕ_c range from a low of ~0.65 in benzene to a high of 0.88 in saturated hydrocarbon solvents.^{10,11} Similarly large ϕ_c values were estimated for ¹*tt*-DPB* where decay via an unreactive 2 ¹A_g state was implicated.¹⁰ An unreactive 2 ¹A-like state may also be involved in the decay of ¹*ct*-DPB*.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the National Science Foundation, most recently by Grant No. CHE-1361962, and by the Florida State University.

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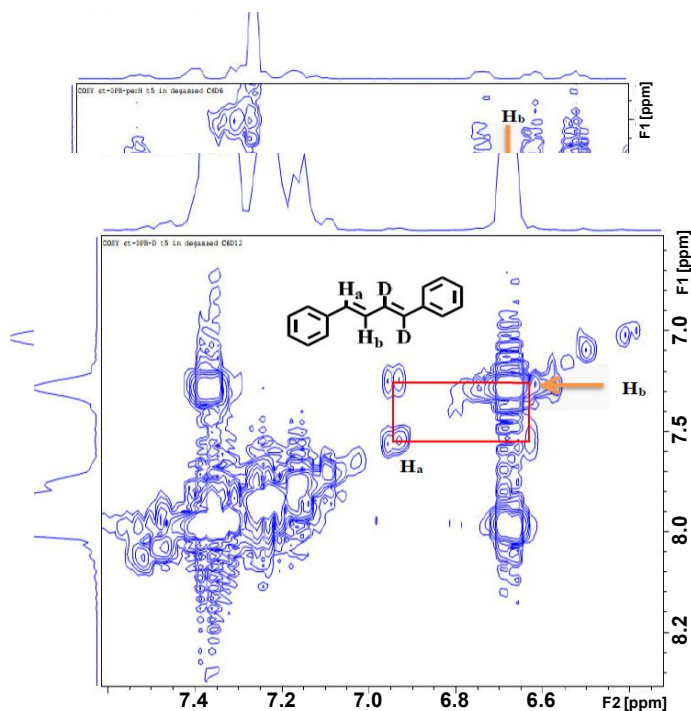


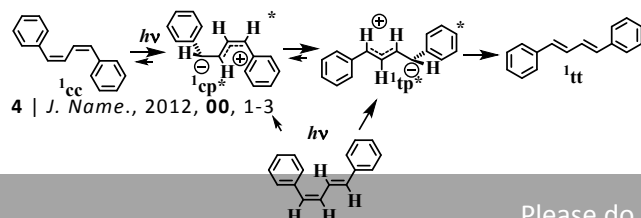
Fig. 9 COSY spectrum showing the *tt*-DPB region from the *ct*-DPB irradiation in C₆D₆.

Fig. 10 COSY spectrum showing the *tt*-DPB_{d2} region from the *ct*-DPB_{d2} irradiation in C₆D₁₂.

from *ct*-DPB, photoisomerization quantum yields favour *tt*-DPB over *cc*-DPB formation by a factor of 17 in ethanol indicating that torsional relaxation to the *trans*-phenallylmethylene intermediate occurs much faster than torsional relaxation to the *cis*-phenallylmethylene intermediate, Scheme 1.¹¹ Decay is, therefore, primarily from ¹tp*. This mechanism would account for an identity reaction if the distortion in the *trans*-allylmethylene intermediate were transferred from side to side: ¹tp* ⇌ ¹pt*, as occurs in 2,4-hexadiene triplets.²⁵

The H_a *trans* vinyl proton appears cleanly as a doublet at δ 6.6 in the 0-time ¹H NMR spectrum of *ct*-DPB_{d2}, Fig. 3. The absence of *cis* vinyl protons that are evident at δ 6.35–6.45 in the *ct*-DPB ¹H NMR spectrum, Fig. 1, shows that our synthesis yielded the desired product. The product that would form from the identity *ct*- to *tc*-DPB reaction is shown in Scheme 2. It has a deuterated *trans* double bond and protons in the *cis* double

Scheme 1. Sequential two-bond photoisomerization of *cc*-DPB.¹¹



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