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# **Enantioselective copper-catalyzed** hydrophosphination of alkenyl isoguinolines†

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An enantioselective hydrophosphination of alkenyl isoquinolines is developed by using a copper-chiral diphosphine ligand catalyst. It provides a direct and atom-efficient approach to prepare a variety of chiral phosphines with an isoquinoline unit in good yields and high enantioselectivities. In addition, these chiral phosphine products are useful bidentate P,N-ligands which showed potential application in asymmetric catalysis.

Chiral organophosphorus compounds play a significant role in bioactive molecules, agrochemistry, and functional materials.1 In addition, they are also broadly applied in transition metal catalysis and organocatalysis as chiral ligands and chiral catalysts.<sup>2</sup> Compared with conventional methods using a stoichiometric amount of chiral starting materials or chiral reagents,<sup>3</sup> asymmetric catalytic approaches have attracted increasing attention in the construction of chiral phosphines. Among them, catalytic asymmetric hydrophosphination is one of the most direct and atom-economical ways for preparation of optically active phosphines.

Pd-Catalyzed asymmetric hydrophosphination of α,β-unsaturated compounds (including α,β-unsaturated aldehydes, ketones, esters, pyrrole amides, sulfonic esters, and sulfonamides) with secondary phosphines has emerged as a versatile method for the construction of chiral phosphine compounds (Scheme 1a).4 Other transition metal complexes such as chiral Ni,5 Pt,6 Cu7 and Mn8 catalysts and organocatalysts9 were also applied in the asymmetric hydrophosphination of electrondeficient alkenes, recently. However, examples where heteroarenes were employed in alkene activation have not appeared due to the relatively poor reactivity of alkenylheteroarenes. In 2021, Terada reported hydrophosphinylation of β-unsubstituted alkenylheteroarene N-oxides with SPO (secondary phosphine oxide) catalyzed by their chiral bis(guanidino)iminophosphorane organosuperbase (Scheme 1b).10 The subsequent reduction of the phosphine oxide product could give quinoline phosphine. Inspired by Yin's recent elegant work on the Cu/TANIAPhos-catalyzed enantioselective

a) Catalytic asymmetric hydrophosphination of electron-deficient alkenes

#### [Pt], [Ni], [Pd], [Mn], [Cu] /L\* + HPAr EWG = electron-withdrawing group Chiral phosphine A. Pt. acrylonitrile and acrylate esters B. Ni, methacrylonitrile C. Pd. enones, enals, enamide, nitroalkenes, carboxylic and sulfonic esters D. Mn, acrylonitrile and alkenyl phosphine oxide b) Hydrophosphinylation of $\beta$ -unsubstituted alkenylheteroarenes N-oxides (Terada) Chiral bis(quanidino)iminophosphoranes KHMDS, toluene c) Cu-catalyzed asymmetric hydrophosphination of $\alpha, \beta$ -unsaturated amides (Yin) Cu(MeCN)<sub>4</sub>PF bisphosphine HPAr<sup>1</sup>Ar<sup>2</sup> Barton's Base d) Cu-catalyzed asymmetric hydrophosphination of alkenyl isoquinolines (This work) Cu(MeCN)<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub>/L\* Barton's base, anisole 0 °C - rt, 24 - 72 h as the nucleophile

Scheme 1 Examples of asymmetric hydrophosphination of electrondeficient alkenes and asymmetric hydrophosphination to alkenyl azaarenes

Chiral phosphine

up to 92% ee

hydrophosphination of  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated amides in which the olefin moiety is sluggishly activated by the adjacent carboxamide group (Scheme 1c),7a we envisioned that the long-time unsolved asymmetric hydrophosphination of intrinsic low electrophilic alkenyl-heteroarenes might be realized with a suitable Cu/chiral phosphine catalyst because of its relative stability in the presence of excess HPPh2. Furthermore, the chiral tertiary phosphine products bearing a N-heteroaromatic ring themselves are potentially useful chiral bidentate P,Nligands in asymmetric catalysis.

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Based on these design considerations and our prior experience in the construction of chiral organophosphorus compounds, 11 we began our study by examining the hydrophosphination of alkenyl isoquinoline 1a with diphenyl phosphine 2a in the presence of a copper complex and Barton's base in toluene at room temperature (Table 1). (*R*)-Binap (L1) gave the bench-stable secondary phosphine oxide 3a in 85% yield by the *in situ* oxidation of the labile secondary phosphine product with hydrogen peroxide, avoiding their isolation and purification while maintaining their structural diversity. However, the enantioselectivity of 3a was very poor (entry 1). Other biphosphine ligands-(*R*)-Segphos (L2), (*R*)-difluorophos (L3), (*R*, *R*)-BDPP (L4), (*R*, *R*)-Ph-BPE (L5) and (*R*, *R*)-Me-Duphos (L6) resulted in low yields and enantio-control (entries 2–6). Catalyzed by (*R*, *R*)-QuinoxP\* (L7), 68% ee was obtained with 77% yield (entry

Table 1 Optimization of reaction conditions

Entry	[Cu]	Ligand	Solvent	$Yield^{b}$ (%)	ee <sup>c</sup> (%)
1	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L1	Toluene	85	3
2	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L2	Toluene	51	32
3	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L3	Toluene	52	20
4	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L4	Toluene	44	40
5	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L5	Toluene	30	-35
6	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L6	Toluene	11	7
7	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L7	Toluene	77	68
8	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Toluene	88	83
9	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> BF <sub>4</sub>	L8	Toluene	36	83
10	Cu(OAc) <sub>2</sub>	L8	Toluene	48	86
11	$Cu(ClO_4)_2 \cdot 6H_2O$	L8	Toluene	74	66
12	Cu(OTf) <sub>2</sub>	L8	Toluene	41	73
13	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	THF	86	84
14	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	1,4-Dioxane	91	83
15	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	DME	93	82
16	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Anisole	92	85
$17^d$	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Anisole	20	73
$18^e$	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Anisole	35	70
19 <sup>f</sup>	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Anisole	24	68
$20^g$	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Anisole	90	87
$21^h$	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Anisole	91	86
$22^{g,i}$	Cu(MeCN) <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	L8	Anisole	94	90

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: [Cu] (10 mol%), ligand (11 mol%), **1a** (0.2 mmol), **2a** (0.3 mmol), Barton's base (1.0 eq.), solvent (1.0 mL). <sup>b</sup> Isolated yields. <sup>c</sup> The ee values were determined by chiral HPLC. <sup>d</sup> DABCO. <sup>e</sup>  $K_2CO_3$ . <sup>f</sup> KOAc. <sup>g</sup> 1.5 eq. Barton's base. <sup>h</sup> 2.0 eq. Barton's base. <sup>i</sup> 0 °C.

7). To our delight, the reaction with (R, R)-BenzP\* (L8) provided the hydrophosphination product 3a in 88% yield with 83% ee (entry 8). Therefore, (R, R)-BenzP\* (L8) was chosen for further optimization. Other Cu precursors, such as Cu(MeCN)<sub>4</sub>BF<sub>4</sub>, Cu(OAc)<sub>2</sub>, Cu(ClO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, and Cu(OTf)<sub>2</sub>, were employed, indicating that Cu(MeCN)<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub> was the best choice (entry 8 vs. entries 9-12). Next, we examined the effect of a solvent on the reaction. It was showed that the reactions in THF, 1,4-dioxane, DME, and anisole provided product 3a with similar high yields, but the reaction in anisole gave the highest ee (entries 13-16). Other bases, including DABCO, K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, and KOAc, were then tested, and led to a slight decrease of the reaction yields (entries 17–19). On increasing the molar ratio of Barton's base/1a from 1:1 to 1.5/1, the ee of product 3a was enhanced to 87% (entry 20). Finally, product 3a was obtained in 94% yield with 90% ee by lowering the temperature to 0 °C (entry 21).

With the optimal conditions, the substrate scope of substituted alkenyl isoquinolines was then investigated (Table 2). As for β-alkyl substituted alkenyl isoquinolines, both linear alkyl (3b and 3c), benzyl (3d) and cyclopropanyl (3e) reacted efficiently with diphenyl phosphine 2a to afford the corresponding products in 80-96% yields with 80-86% ee. The absolute configuration of product 3e was confirmed as (R) by Xray crystal structure analysis.12 Interestingly, there was only 1,4addition when the conjugate divinyl isoquinoline 1f was investigated, and the hydrophosphination product 3f was obtained in 70% yield with 86% ee. Subsequently, substrates with aryl groups were also evaluated. The 1-styrylisoquinoline 1g reacted smoothly under the reaction conditions, providing the product 3g in 87% yield and 92% ee. A wide range of alkenyl isoquinolines with an electron-donating group (3h and 3i) or an electron-withdrawing group (3j, 3k, 3l, 3m, and 3n) at the paraposition of the phenyl ring were tolerated. In general, the reactions afforded products in moderate to excellent yields with moderate to high enantioselectivity. A good outcome was also achieved upon introducing a methyl group at the meta-position of the aryl group of the substrate (3p). The reaction of 1q containing a 2-naphthyl substituent proceeded to afford 3q with a decreased yield and enantioselectivity (70% yield and 77% ee). Substrates with a heteroaryl, such as 2-furanyl (3r), 3-furanyl (3s), 3-thienyl (3t), and 3-pyridinyl (3u), were well-tolerated under this catalytic condition. The 2-pyridinyl (3v) or 4-pyridinyl (3w) substituted substrate also worked well to deliver products in excellent yields, but led to an obvious decrease in enantioselectivities. The reaction between α-phenyl-substituted 1x and Ph<sub>2</sub>PH was attempted, affording the product 3x in 93% yield and 53% ee. It was found that quinoline 1y also could be hydrophosphinated with this catalyst at 60 °C to provide the product 3y in 73% yield with 54% ee. Furthermore, alkenyl pyridines were also compatible with the reaction conditions to deliver the corresponding products in good yields and enantioselectivities (3z and 3aa).

The substitute groups on isoquinolines were also evaluated (Table 2). Substrates with electron-donating groups (Me and OMe) or with electron-withdrawing groups (F and Br) at the 4-(3ab and 3ac), 5-(3ad), and 6-positions (3ae, 3af, 3ag and 3ah) of the isoquinoline ring were well-tolerated affording products in

Table 2 Substrate scope<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: Cu(MeCN)<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub> (10 mol%), ligand (11 mol%), 1 (0.2 mmol), 2 (0.3 mmol), Barton's base (0.3 mmol), anisole (1.0 mL). Isolated yields. The ee values were determined by chiral HPLC. <sup>b</sup> Room temperature. <sup>c</sup> 24 h. <sup>d</sup> 72 h. <sup>e</sup> 60 °C.

73–93% yields with 78–89% ee. Finally, we turned our attention towards the scope of diarylphosphines **2**. Hydrophosphination with  $(p\text{-Me-C}_6H_4)_2\text{PH}$  and  $(3,5\text{-Me-C}_6H_3)_2\text{PH}$  led to the corresponding products **3ai** and **3aj** with excellent yields and good enantioselectivities. However, other phosphines, such as  $(o\text{-Me-C}_6H_4)_2\text{PH}$ ,  $(p\text{-MeO-C}_6H_4)_2\text{PH}$ ,  $(p\text{-F-C}_6H_4)_2\text{PH}$  and  $\text{Cy}_2\text{PH}$ , were not suitable for the reaction and only trace expected products were detected.

Chiral bidentate P,N-ligands are one of the most important family of ligands widely used in asymmetric catalysis.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, there is an increasing demand for the efficient synthesis of chiral bidentate P,N-ligands. However, most of the protocols for the synthesis of chiral P,N-ligands focused on the chiral

(a) Synthesis of chiral bidentate P,N-ligand

(PhO)<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>2</sub>H (15 mol%)
PhSiH<sub>3</sub> (4 eq.)
rbourner, relux, 12 h

3a
99% ee
after recrystallization

(b) Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic etherification

OAc
FBOH
K<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, toluene, rt, 24 h

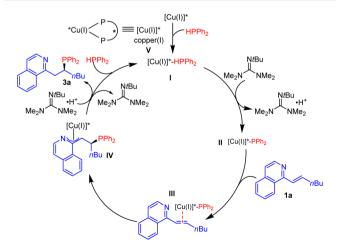
TO
BD

TO

Scheme 2 Synthesis applications.

resolution or required tedious multistep synthesis. <sup>14</sup> Herein, the reduction of phosphine oxide product **3a** with phenylsilane in the presence of diphenyl phosphate provided phosphine **4a** in 80% yield without loss of enantiomeric purity (Scheme 2). Subsequently, we examined our P,N-ligand **4a** in the Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic etherification of benzyl alcohol, obtaining the desired product 7 in good yield (85%) and moderate ee (57%). In addition, the product **3ah** could also be transformed by Pd-catalyzed Sonogashira cross-coupling. The corresponding alkynylation product **8** was obtained in excellent yield without a decline in enantiopurity.

A possible mechanism for the reaction was proposed based on the literature (Scheme 3). <sup>7a,b,15</sup> Chiral copper complex **V** is formed by Cu(MeCN)<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub> and (*R*, *R*)-BenzP\*. Coordination between HPPh<sub>2</sub> and chiral copper complex **V** generates complex **I**, which undergoes deprotonation in the presence of Barton's base to produce the nucleophilic copper(i)-diphenylphosphide species **II**. Then, the alkene tethered with isoquinoline coordinates to complex **II** and affords the Cu-phosphido-alkene



Scheme 3 Proposed catalytic cycle.

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complex III. Next, asymmetric addition of the diarylphosphido group on copper to the alkenyl-substituted isoquinoline provides an aza- $\pi$ -allylcopper intermediate IV, which is protonated to release the phosphination product 3a and regenerates copper complex V for the next catalytic cycle.

In summary, we have established an operationally simple and highly enantioselective Cu(1)-catalyzed hydrophosphination reaction of alkenyl-substituted isoquinolines. This method afforded a direct and atom efficient access to chiral phosphines with an isoquinoline unit in high yields and enantioselectivities in most cases. Furthermore, the product was showcased as a new chiral P,N-type ligand in palladium-catalyzed asymmetric allylic etherification. Further work on the structure modification and application of these chiral phosphine products in other asymmetric reactions is underway in our laboratory.

## Data availability

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pen Access Article. Published on 21 March 2023. Downloaded on 10/31/2025 12:36:20 PM.

The datasets supporting this article have been uploaded as part of the ESI.‡

### Author contributions

Dr Q. Yang performed the experiments and prepared the supplementary information. J. Zhou collected some data. Prof. J. Wang conceived and directed the project. Q. Yang and J. Wang wrote the paper.

#### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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- 12 CCDC 2201645 [for 3e] contains the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge from The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via <a href="https://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data\_request/cif.">https://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data\_request/cif.</a>;
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