Copper Hydride-Catalyzed Enantioselective Synthesis of Axially Chiral 1,3-Disubstituted Allenes

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ABSTRACT: The general enantioselective synthesis of axially chiral disubstituted allenes from prochiral starting materials remains a long-standing challenge in organic synthesis. Here, we report an efficient enantio- and chemoselective copper hydride-catalyzed semi-reduction of conjugated enynes to furnish 1,3-disubstituted allenes using water as the proton source. This protocol is sufficiently mild to accommodate an assortment of functional groups including keto, ester, amino, halo, and hydroxyl groups. Additionally, applications of this method for the selective synthesis of mono-deuterated allenes and chiral 2,5-dihydropyrroles are described.

Allenes form a distinctive class of compounds capable of exhibiting axial chirality. They are represented in over 2,900 natural metabolites and synthetic compounds, and have been studied with regard to biological activity for over forty years.[1] The introduction of allenes into steroids, prostaglandins, carbacyclins, and unnatural amino acids and nucleosides has been shown to increase the metabolic stability, bioavailability, and potency of these bioactive compounds.[2] Additionally, these cumulated dienes have found use in molecular materials and as synthetic intermediates in complex chemical syntheses as substrates due to their substituent-loading capability and enhanced reactivity under mild reaction conditions. Their transformation often takes advantage of axial-to-central chirality transfer to generate one or more new stereogenic centers.[3] Finally, chiral allenes have also been explored in asymmetric autocatalysis and as ligands for the development of enantioselective transformations.[4-6]

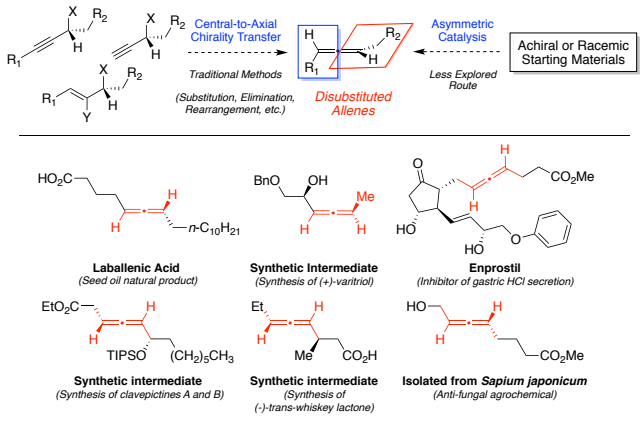


Figure 1. Synthetic strategies for the construction of enantioenriched allenes and representative examples of valuable 1,3-disubstituted allenes

While the utility of chiral allenes has been widely explored, the selective synthesis of these valuable materials still remains a challenge in organic synthesis.[3a, 7] Traditional approaches to access enantioenriched allenes most commonly start from chiral, enantioenriched precursors wherein the allene product is generated through nucleophilic displacement, rearrangement or elimination with central-to-axial chirality transfer (Figure 1) or through resolution of racemic allenes. More recently, several methods have employed achiral or racemic starting materials in catalytic asymmetric versions of these reactions to access the desired product using catalysts bearing chiral ligands. However, the majority of these reports target the synthesis of tri- or tetrasubstituted allenes.[8]

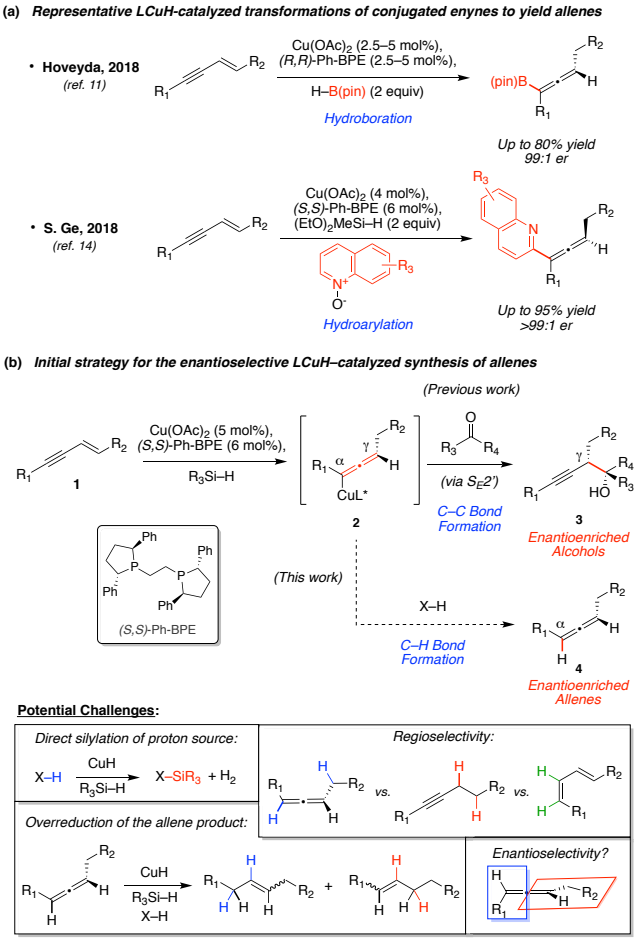
The direct catalytic conversion of prochiral 1,3-enynes to enantioenriched allenes has become a practical synthetic strategy in recent years, owing to the accessibility of these substrates.[9] Early reports by Hayashi describe the direct catalytic and enantioselective conversion of 1,3-enynes to boryl-, silyl-, or aryl allenes via palladium or rhodium catalysis.[8a–d] Since then, methods detailing the stereoselective transformations of enynes, including reports by Loh, Feng, Tang, Sun and Malcolmson, have provided novel routes to enantioenriched allenes containing esters, lactones or amines.[8g, l, n, p, 10]

The LCuH-catalyzed hydrofunctionalization of 1,3-enynes to access enantioenriched allenes was first reported by the Hoveyda group wherein trisubstituted allenyl boronate derivatives are generated in high yield and enantioselectivity (Scheme 1a).[11] Shortly thereafter, the Ge and Engle groups independently disclosed their own reports of enyne hydroboration, followed by Ge's report of the catalytic asymmetric hydroarylation of enynes to provide access to quinoline-substituted allenes.[12–14]

Despite these recent advances, fewer reports describe the catalytic synthesis of enantioenriched 1,3-disubstituted allenes from prochiral or racemic precursors.[10, 15–20] While these

methods have offered elegant and innovative routes to this class of allenes, the vast majority of them provide access to a limited scope of products including allenyl esters,[16, 18] alcohols,[19] and amines.[10, 16, 20] This modest scope is perhaps due to difficulty in controlling the stereochemical outcome of a three-carbon axis of chirality possessing two hydrogen substituents without an additional functional group handle. Consequently, there persists an unmet need for a general strategy to access a broad range of 1,3-disubstituted axially chiral allenes.

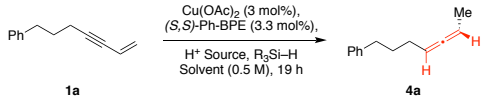
Scheme 1. Precedent for the Proposed Asymmetric LCuH-Catalyzed Semi-Reduction of 1,3-Enynes



In the course of our ongoing studies on the hydroalkylation of 1,3-enynes with imines, we serendipitously discovered an alternative strategy for the synthesis of 1,3-disubstituted allenes (Scheme 1b). Analogous to our previous report on the hydroalkylation of conjugated enynes with ketones,[21] enantioenriched allenyl copper intermediates **2** are generated *via* hydrocupration of an achiral 1,3-enyne starting material (**1**). However, trapping of the allenyl copper species **2** directly with a proton, instead of a ketone (which favors the alternative S_E2' reaction pathway to yield γ-adduct **3**), would provide access to axially chiral 1,3-disubstituted allenes (**4**). Potential challenges in developing this reaction include avoiding the unproductive silylation of the protonating reagent,[22] the regioselectivity[23] and enantioselectivity of the process, and preventing further reduction of the allene product in the presence of the copper hydride catalyst. To date, the semi-reduction of 1,3-enynes to enantioenriched disubstituted allenes has only been demonstrated with the stoichiometric use of chiral metal reducing agents.[24] Herein, we report the asymmetric catalytic semi-reduction of 1,3-enynes to furnish axially chiral allenes enabled by CuH-catalysis.

We began our studies utilizing 1,2-bis((2*S*,5*S*)-2,5-diphenylphospholano)ethane [(*S,S)*-Ph-BPE] in combination with $Cu(OAc)_2$ and dimethoxy(methyl)silane (DMMS) to generate a chiral LCuH complex previously shown to engage 1,3-enyne **1a** (Table 1).[21] At room temperature with *t*-BuOH as the proton source, the complete consumption of **1a** occurred yielding a complex mixture consisting primarily of products from the unselective hydrogenation of the desired product, allene **4a** (entry 1). Decreasing the reaction temperature to –10 ºC slowed the over-reduction and provided **4a** in 34% yield and 60:40 enantiomeric ratio (er) (entry 2). A subsequent screen of several ethereal solvents indicated that both chemo- and enantioselectivity were enhanced by replacing THF with 1,2-dimethoxyethane (DME) (entries 3–5).

Table 1. Reaction Optimization[a]



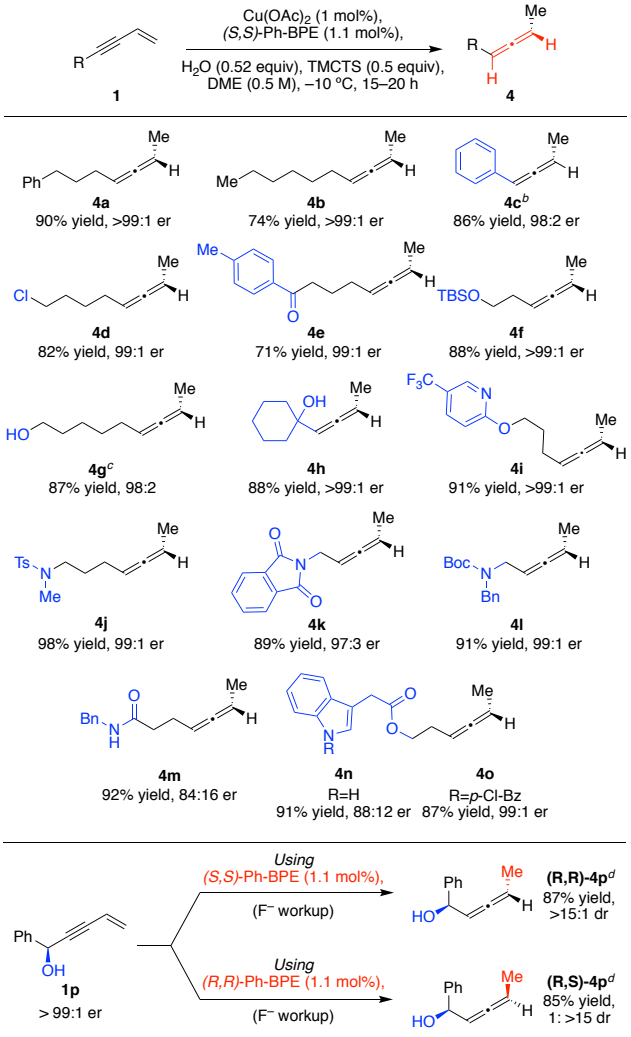
Entry	T (ºC)	Solvent	Proton Source	Silane	% Conv.	% Yield[b]	er[c]
1	23	THF	*t*-BuOH (1.5 equiv)	DMMS	100	0	–
2	–10	THF	*t*-BuOH (1.5 equiv)	DMMS	100	34	60:40
3	–10	MTBE[d]	*t*-BuOH (1.5 equiv)	DMMS	64	36	87:13
4	–10	1,4-Dioxane	*t*-BuOH (1.5 equiv)	DMMS	67	26	92:8
5	–10	DME	*t*-BuOH (1.5 equiv)	DMMS	50	36	96:4
6	–10	DME	*i*-PrOH (1.5 equiv)	DMMS	100	68	99:1
7	–10	DME	*i*-PrOH (1.1 equiv)	DMMS	100	90	99:1
8	–10	DME	H_2O (0.55 equiv)	DMMS	100	90	>99:1
9[e]	–10	DME	H_2O (0.52 equiv)	TMCTS	100	90[f]	>99:1

[a] Conditions: Reactions were carried out under N_2 atmosphere. 0.2 mmol enyne (1 equiv), copper(II) acetate (3 mol%), *(S,S)*-Ph-BPE (3.3 mol%), silane (4 equiv) in solvent (0.4 mL). [b] Yield was determined by ^1H NMR spectroscopy of the crude reaction mixture, using mesitylene as an internal standard. [c] Enantiomeric ratio was determined by GC analysis, and the absolute configuration of **4a** was determined by analogy to desilylated **4f** (see the Supporting Information for more details). [d] MTBE = methyl *tert*-butyl ether. [e] Reaction was run with 1 mol% copper(II) acetate and 1.1 mol% *(S,S)*-Ph-BPE over 16.5 h instead. [f] Reported as an average of two isolated yields.

The use of a sterically less hindered proton source, *i*-PrOH, provided improved conversion and enantiomeric ratio of product **4a.** Moreover, we found that by decreasing the quantity of *i*-PrOH to 1.1 equivalents minimized the amount of overreduction that was observed (entries 6–7). As the use of a less hin-

dered proton source proved beneficial for both yield and er, we next examined the use of H_2O (0.55 equiv) which resulted in the efficient delivery of both protons in the enyne semi-reduction (entry 8). Further, we found that substituting DMMS with 0.5 equiv of 2,4,6,8-tetramethylcyclotetrasiloxane (TMCTS) and decreasing the catalyst loading to 1 mol% provided improved reaction conditions for the enantioselective semi-reduction of 1,3-enyne **1a** affording the desired product *(R)*-**4a** in 90% isolated yield and >99:1 er (entry 9).

Table 2. Substrate Scope of the LCuH–Catalyzed Asymmetric Semi-Reduction of 1,3-Enynes to Allenes[a]

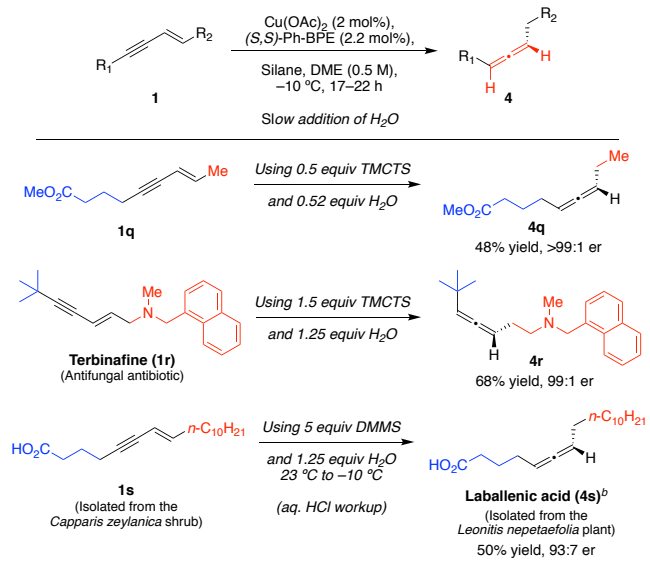


[a] Reactions were carried out under N_2 atmosphere at –10 °C. Isolated yields and enantiomeric ratios are reported as an average of two independent runs. [b] Yield was determined by ^1H NMR spectroscopy using mesitylene as an internal standard due to the volatility of the product. [c] With 0.25 equiv H_2O instead. [d] Yield and diastereomeric ratio reported for a single run.

Next, we surveyed the generality of the LCuH-catalyzed asymmetric semi-reduction of an assortment of terminal 1,3-enynes (Table 2). Unfunctionalized substrates are efficiently converted to the corresponding allenes with good yield and exceptional er (**4a**–**c**). Enynes bearing a variety of functional groups are tolerated under the reaction conditions including potentially reducible groups such as alkyl chlorides (**4d**) and ketones (**4e**) as well as ethers (**4f**, **4i**), amines (**4j**, **4l**), and various heterocycles (**4i**, **4k**, **4n**, **4o**). Substrates containing unprotected alcohols are not only tolerated, but the unhindered primary alcohol of enyne **1g,** itself, serves as a proton source in the reduction, permitting the use of only 0.25 equivalents of H_2O additive to furnish allene **4g**. The reactivity of and selectivity in the semi-reduction of sterically more encumbered enyne **1h**, bearing an unprotected propargylic alcohol, were unaffected, providing allenyl alcohol **4h** with 88% yield and >99:1 er. While substrates containing free N–H bonds react with high yield, the allene products are produced with a diminished er (**4m**, **n**). In the case of **1n** it was demonstrated that the use of the protected variant, **1o**, provided significantly improved results (**4o**). Finally, this protocol exhibits excellent catalyst control in the semi-reduction of chiral enyne **1p** to furnish either diastereomer of allene **4p** depending on the enantiomer of ligand used.

Our initial efforts to effect the asymmetric semi-reduction of internal 1,3-enyne substrates proved considerably more challenging. This difficulty was presumably due, in part, to an increased energetic barrier to hydrocupration, resulting in unproductive silylation of the proton source and, in some cases, competitive overreduction of the initially-formed allene products. To ameliorate these issues, we found that the utilization of a protocol with the slow addition of water was essential (Table 3). The reaction of ester-containing enyne **1q** occurred in moderate yield, largely due to competitive overreduction of the desired product, **4q**. The antifungal antibiotic Terbinafine (**1r**) was cleanly transformed to **4r** in 68% yield and 99:1 er, although it necessitated an increase in H_2O and TMCTS loading.[25] The direct conversion of fatty acid natural product **1s** to laballenic acid (**4s**), a seed oil natural product isolated from the *Leonitis nepetaefolia* plant could also be accomplished [26–29] The *in situ* protection of carboxylic acid **1s** with DMMS (to furnish the corresponding silyl ester) at room temperature was carried out, followed by slow addition of water at –10 °C to deliver laballenic acid in 50% yield and 93:7 er.

Table 3. Select Examples of the LCuH–Catalyzed Asymmetric Semi-Reduction of Internal Enynes to Allenes[a]



[a] Reactions were carried out under N_2 atmosphere at –10 °C, H_2O was added over a 16 hour time period. Isolated yields and enantiomeric ratios are reported as an average of two independent

runs. [b] Reaction required a 1 hour pre-stir at room temperature prior to addition of water at –10 ºC

Based on previous mechanistic studies and DFT calculations,[11, 21] we propose the following mechanism detailed in Figure 2. After generation of the chiral LCuH complex **I**, enantioselective hydrocupration of enyne **II** affords a chiral propargylic copper species (**III**). This undergoes a stereospecific 1,3-isomerization to yield allenyl copper intermediate **V**. Next intermediate **V** is protonated to furnish the final product, allene **VI**. σ-Bond metathesis between **VII** and silane (**VIII**) results in the formation of silanol **IX** and regeneration of **I**. As less than a full equivalent of water is utilized in this process, we propose that silanol **IX** can also facilitate protodemetallation, producing siloxane **X**.

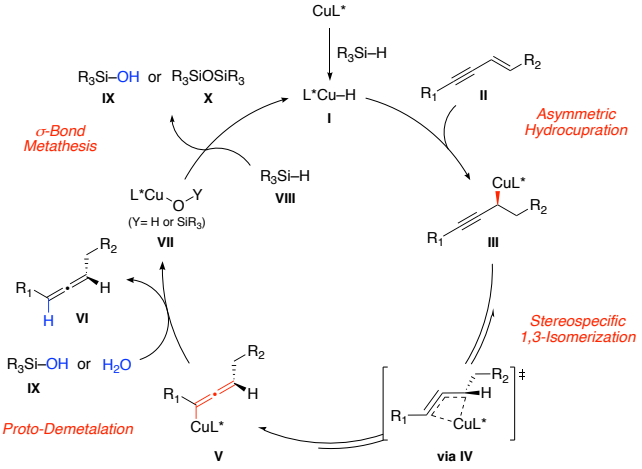
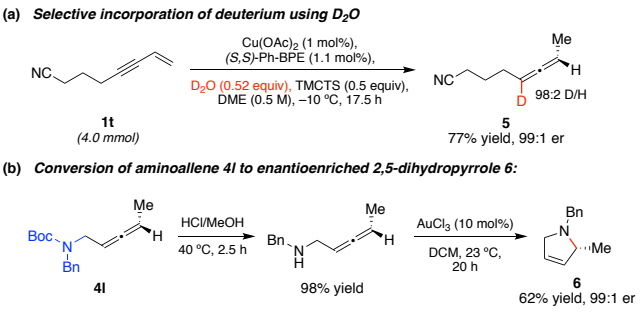


Figure 2. Proposed catalytic cycle for the LCuH-catalyzed conversion of 1,3-enynes to allenes

Two examples demonstrating further applications of this methodology are depicted in Scheme 2. The incorporation of deuterium into molecular scaffolds is pervasive not only in the pharmaceutical industry, due to the enhanced metabolic stability and safety imparted by corresponding deutero-analogs, but also in mechanistic studies and protein crystallography.[30] Substitution of H_2O for D_2O selectively delivers enantioenriched mono-deuterated products, as exhibited in the conversion of enyne **1t** to allene **5** with 98:2 D/H incorporation (Scheme 2a). This protocol represents a new strategy for the deuterium labeling of allenes, employing an affordable, easy to handle and abundant deuterium source.

Scheme 2. Applications of the LCuH-Catalyzed Asymmetric Reduction for Deuterium Incorporation and Heterocycle Synthesis



Additionally, enantioenriched allenyl alcohols and amines are known to serve as valuable synthetic intermediates toward the production of chiral heterocycles including dihydrofurans and dihydropyrroles.[3h, 31, 32] Taking advantage of the highly selective nature of gold-catalyzed cycloisomerization chemistry, α-aminoallene **4l** furnished 2,5-dihydropyrrole **6** with complete axial-to-point chirality transfer (Scheme 2b).[33, 34]

In summary, we have developed a LCuH-catalyzed asymmetric semi-reduction of 1,3-enynes to supply highly enantioenriched 1,3-disubstituted allenes in up to 98% yield and >99:1 er. This chemistry benefits from the functional group tolerance afforded by the mild reducing nature of LCuH catalysts and employs only 1–2 mol% catalyst loading. Moreover, the utilization of substoichiometric quantities of H_2O as the proton source and TMCTS as the hydride source provides an efficient protocol for the hydrogenation of terminal 1,3-enynes. The reduction of internal conjugated enynes is enabled via slow addition of water and has been demonstrated through the late-stage derivatization of antibiotic Terbinafine and the synthesis of the seed oil natural product, laballenic acid. Furthermore, this protocol provides an efficient synthetic route for the construction of deutero-allenes as well as aza-heterocycles.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website.

General procedural information and characterization data (PDF)
NMR Spectra (PDF)
SFC, GC and HPLC Traces (PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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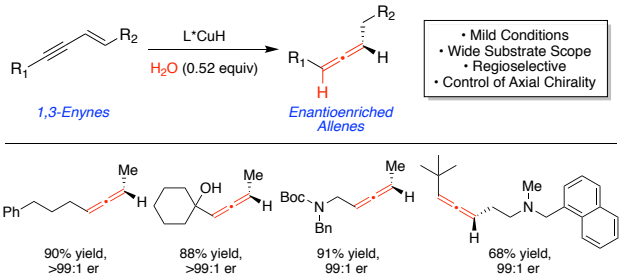
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• Mild Conditions
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• Control of Axial Chirality
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Enantioenriched Allenes

Ph
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H
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OH
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88% yield,
>99:1 er
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