

Synergistic Photoenzymatic Anti-Markovnikov Hydroarylation of Olefins via Heteroaryl Radical Intermediates

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Supporting Information Placeholder

ABSTRACT: Heteroaromatic alkylations are indispensable reactions for synthesizing biologically active molecules. The anti-Markovnikov hydroarylation of olefins using heteroaryl halides furnishes the product as a single regioisomer, however, catalytic variants are ineffective in controlling the stereochemical outcome of these reactions. Here, we report a synergistic photoenzymatic hydroarylation of olefins using flavin-dependent 'ene'-reductases with ruthenium photoredox catalysts. Enzyme homologs were identified, which provide access to both product enantiomers in greater than 80% yield with up to 99:1 er. This method is effective for styrenyl and unactivated alkenes, highlighting the generality of this approach. Binding assay study revealed strong binding of the photocatalyst with the enzyme for superior catalytic activity. Mechanistic studies suggest efficient intermolecular coupling is possible because alkene binding accelerates the consumption of the aryl halide.

Heteroaromatics are essential structural components of small-molecule pharmaceutical and agrochemical compounds (Figure 1a).¹ As the percentage of sp³ hybridized atoms in drugs increases, there is an increased need for pyridyl structures with adjacent stereocenters.^{2,3} Benzylic and homobenzylic stereocenters are traditionally set via asymmetric reduction of the corresponding alkene.^{4,5} While these methods offer unparalleled levels of enantioselectivity, they do not build molecular complexity. Transition metal and Brønsted acid catalyzed cross-couplings and conjugate additions to vinyl pyridines also provide access to alkylated heterocycles, however, there remains a need for alternative asymmetric reactions that use readily available starting materials.⁶⁻¹⁴

Olefin hydroarylations are attractive for preparing structurally complex alkyl-substituted pyridines with benzylic and homobenzylic stereocenters. This general coupling reaction can be achieved using a few distinct catalytic strategies, including aromatic C-H activation,¹⁵⁻¹⁷ reductive Heck reactions,¹⁸ metal-catalyzed hydrogen atom transfer to olefins,¹⁹⁻²¹ and reductive radical couplings using photoredox catalysts.²²⁻²⁵ Despite the bevy of synthetic methods, none of these reactions have been rendered asymmetric.

Enzymes are ideal scaffolds for asymmetric synthesis because they can use numerous non-covalent interactions to control the reaction trajectories of highly reactive intermediates.²⁶ Over the past decade, our group has pioneered the area of photoenzymatic catalysis, where photonic energy is used to drive

biocatalytic transformations.²⁷ Our group and others demonstrated that flavin-dependent 'ene'-reductases (EREDs) could generate alkyl and nitrogen-centered radicals for olefin hydroalkylation and hydroamination reactions.²⁸⁻⁴³ Reactions occur with high levels of enantioselectivity because the protein can preferentially deliver a hydrogen atom to one prochiral face of the alkyl radical formed after C-C or C-N bond formation. Hydrogen atom transfer remains a challenging mechanistic step to render asymmetric, with reports only recently demonstrating the ability of small molecule thiols to achieve this feat.^{44,45}

Based on the ability of EREDs to control HAT, we questioned whether they could catalyze asymmetric hydroarylations using aryl radicals (Figure 1b). Based on pioneered studies by Jui, we hypothesized that aryl halides could be photochemically reduced to generate an aryl radical.²²⁻²⁵ This amphiphilic intermediate can react with electronically diverse alkenes to afford an alkyl radical which is reductively quenched via HAT from the flavin cofactor.⁴⁶

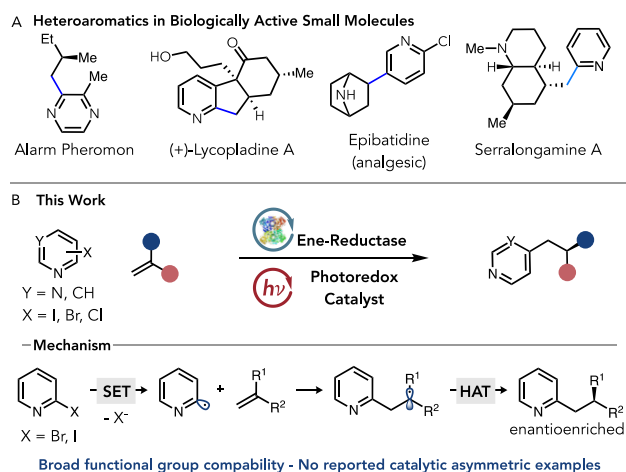


Figure 1. Synthesis of Heteroaromatics with Stereocenters. A) examples of heteroaromatics in biologically active molecules. B) Olefin hydroarylation using aryl radicals. C) Synergistic photoenzymatic strategy for asymmetric hydroarylation.

We began by exploring the coupling of 2-iodopyridine with α -methylstyrene using a series of ERED homologs in the presence of a cofactor turnover system to reduce the enzyme to the hydroquinone (FMN_{Hq}) oxidation state while irradiating with blue LEDs (Table 1). While electron-deficient aryl halides are known to form charge transfer complexes with electron donors (amines, thiolates),⁴⁷⁻⁵⁰ no product was formed under these conditions

(Supplemental Table 24, entry 2). We hypothesized that the lack of product formation was due to back electron transfer from the aryl radical anion to the flavin semiquinone (FMN_{sq}) being fast compared to mesolytic cleavage of the C–I bond.^{51,52} To slow back electron transfer rates, we explore using exogenous photocatalysts for radical initiation. Previous studies found that exogenous photocatalysts could generate radicals when the biological cofactor alone was ineffective.^{28,32,35,53,54} When catalytic quantities of Ru(bpy)₃Cl₂ were added to a reaction containing old yellow enzyme 3 (OYE3), the hydroarylated product was formed in 25% yield with 96:4 e.r. favoring the (*S*)-enantiomer (Table 1, entry 2). We hypothesized that superior yields could be achieved by modifying the photocatalyst structure. Adding two carboxylates to the 4,4′ positions of one of the bipyridine ligands increased the yield to 54% with no change in enantioselectivity (Table 1, entry 3). The (*R*)-enantiomer of the product can be formed in 29% yield using a previously identified variant of the ERED from *Gluconobacter oxydans* (GluER-T36A-Y177F) (Table 1, entry 4).

Entry	ERED	Photocatalyst	Yield (%)	Enantiomeric Ratio (e.r.)
1 ^a	OYE3	-	1	98:2
2	OYE3	Ru(bpy) ₃ Cl ₂	25	96:4
3	OYE3	Ru(bpy) ₂ (4,4′-CO ₂ Hbpy)	54	96:4
4 ^b	GluER-T36A-Y177F	Ru(bpy) ₂ (4-CO ₂ Hbpy)	25	3:97
5 ^c	OYE3	Ru(bpy) ₂ (4-CO ₂ Hbpy)	81	98:2
6 ^d	OYE3	Ru(bpy) ₂ (4-CO ₂ Hbpy)	59	96:4
7 ^e	OYE3	Ru(bpy) ₂ (4-CO ₂ Hbpy)	29	91:9
8 ^f	OYE3	Ru(bpy) ₂ (4-CO ₂ Hbpy)	41	97:3
9 ^g	OYE3	Ru(bpy) ₂ (4-CO ₂ Hbpy)	36	97:3

Table 2. Reaction Optimization. Reaction conditions: 2-iodopyridine **1a** (20 μmol), **2a** (5 equiv.), NADP⁺ (1 mol%), GDH-105 (1.5 mg), Glucose (1 equiv.), MES buffer (pH 6, 100 mM, 750 μL), acetonitrile (250 μL), Blue LEDs, 17 h. ^a **2a** (3 equiv.), GDH-105 (0.1 mg), Glucose (1 equiv.). ^b glucose (2 equiv.), acetonitrile (180 mL, 18% v/v). ^c 4-iodopyridine **1b** (20 μmol), **2a** (3 equiv.), GDH-105 (0.1 mg), Glucose (1 equiv.). ^d OYE3 (0.5 mol%), 4-iodopyridine **1b** (20 μmol), ^e OYE3 (0.1 mol%), 4-iodopyridine **1b** (20 μmol). ^f 4-bromopyridine was used instead of **1a**, ^g 4-chloropyridine used as a substrate instead of **1a**.

When exploring other iodopyridine isomers, we found that 4-iodopyridine was more reactive, affording the coupled product in 81% yield with 98:2 e.r. when using Ru(bpy)₂(4-CO₂Hbpy) as the photocatalyst (Table 1, entry 5). Lowering the enzyme loading to 0.5 mol % and 0.1 mol % resulted in lower yields with a modest decrease in enantioselectivity (Table 1, entries 6 and 7). We were pleased that 4-bromo and 4-chloropyridines were effective radical precursors, producing 41% and 36% yield, respectively (Table 1, entries 8 and 9). Reactions can be run on a preparative scale using crude enzyme lysate, affording product in 30% yield with 97:3 e.r. while reactions with purified enzyme formed the product in 60% yield with 97:3 e.r. (Supplemental Figure S2 and S3), With either 2-iodopyridine or 4-iodopyridine,

control experiments confirmed that each reaction component was necessary for product formation (Supplemental Table 17 and 24).

We explored the alkene scope and limitations of the reaction using 4-iodopyridines as a radical precursor (Figure 2, 3b-3v). We tested different substituted α-methylstyrenes and found that the enzyme tolerates varying electron-donating groups on the arene (Figure 2, 3b-3f). Halogen substituents are also tolerated on the alkene, affording the product a good yield with high levels of enantioselectivity (Figure 2, 3g-3l). While *ortho*-substitution affords product in diminished yield, the high enantioselectivity indicates that these substituents impact the C–C bond formation more than the radical termination event (Figure 2, 3c, and 3f). The enzyme tolerates unprotected allylic alcohols, highlighting the functional group tolerance of the reaction (Figure 2, 3m). Vinyl pyridines were efficient coupling partners for this reaction, providing the product with up to 98% yield with excellent enantioselectivity (Figure 2, 3n-p). Importantly, this reaction also accepts non-styrenyl substrates, significantly expanding the types of products that can be accessed using this method. Protected piperidines bearing exocyclic methylenes were reactive. Spirocyclic cyclobutanes were also reactive but afforded products with lower yields. Finally, unprotected allylic alcohols are tolerated, producing products in good yield but low levels of enantioselectivity.

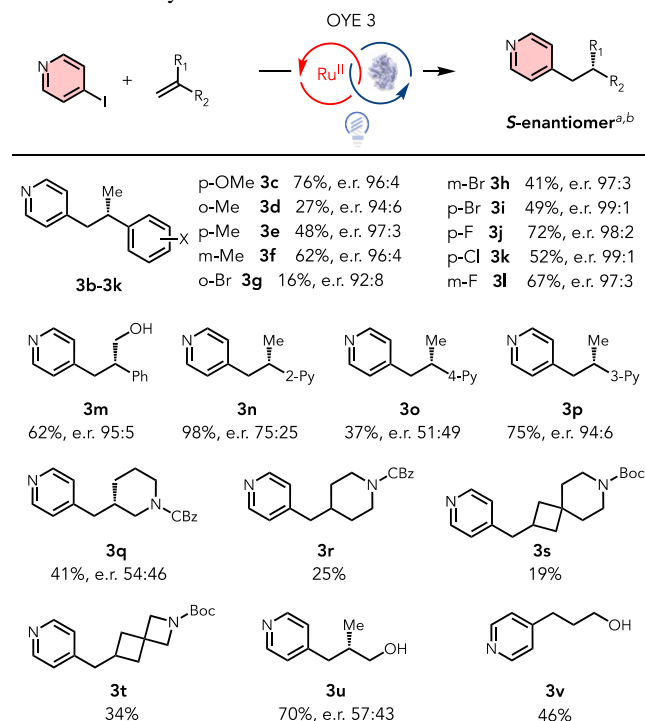


Figure 2. Scope of olefins: Reaction conditions for the *S* enantiomers: Aryl iodide (20 μmol, 1 equiv.), olefins (60 μmol, 3 equiv.), purified OYE 3 aliquot (200 nmol, 1 mol%), photocatalyst (2 mol%), NADP⁺ (1 mol%), GDH-105 (0.1 mg), glucose (1 equiv.), acetonitrile (250 μL, 25% v/v), MES buffer (pH 6, 100 mM, 750 μL). The reaction mixture was stirred at 360 rpm and irradiated.

Next, we explore the scope and limitations of heteroaromatic halides (Figure 3, 3aa-ar). This reaction accepts a diverse range of substituted iodopyridine decorated with electron-donating and withdrawing groups on the pyridine ring (Figure 3, 3aa-aj). Notably, the reaction accepts 2-, 3-, and 4-iodopyridines, forming the product in good yield and selectivity, suggesting that the locations of the basic nitrogen relative to the radical do not

significantly impact the reaction. Beyond pyridines, the reaction also accommodates various iodoquinolines. While the yields are more modest, the enantioselectivity remains high (Figure 3, **3ak-an**). 2-bromoquinoline can also afford the corresponding product in modest yield and selectivity (Figure 3, **3am**). 2-iodopyridazine and 2-bromopyrimidine are also reactive and provided the corresponding products in good yields and excellent enantioselectivity (Table 3, **3ao** and **3ap**). Finally, electron-deficient non-heteroaromatic aryl iodide provided the products in moderate yield but with high enantioselectivity (Table 3, **3aq** and **3ar**). As halopyridines have a similar reduction potential (between -1.85 and -2.29 V vs SCE) to 4-iodoacetophenone (-1.85 V vs SCE),²² these results suggest that reduction potential is a better predictor of reactivity than the presence of a basic nitrogen.

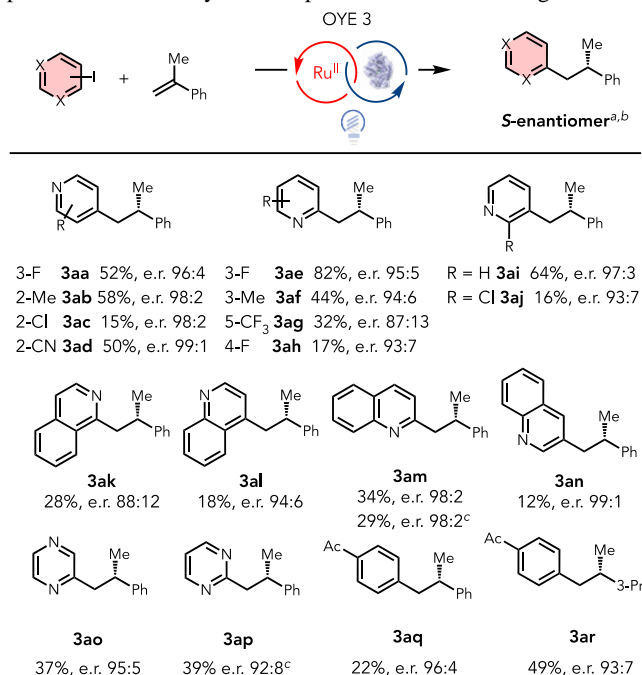


Figure 3. Scope of heterocycles: Reaction conditions for the *S* enantiomers: Aryl iodide (20 μ mol, 1 equiv.), olefins (60 μ mol, 3 equiv.), purified OYE 3 aliquot (200 nmol, 1 mol%), photocatalyst (2 mol%), NADP⁺ (1 mol%), GDH-105 (0.1 mg), glucose (1 equiv.), acetonitrile (250 μ L, 25% v/v), MES buffer (pH 6, 100 mM, 750 μ L). The reaction mixture was stirred at 360 rpm and irradiated with blue LEDs for 17 h. Reaction conditions for the *R* enantiomers: Aryl iodide (20 μ mol, 1 equiv.), olefins (60 μ mol, 3 equiv.), purified GluER T36A Y177F aliquot (200 nmol, 1 mol%), photocatalyst (2 mol%), NADP⁺ (1 mol%), GDH-105 (0.1 mg), glucose (2 equiv.), acetonitrile (200 μ L, 20% v/v), MES buffer (pH 6, 100 mM, 800 μ L). The reaction mixture was stirred at 360 rpm and irradiated with blue LEDs for 17 h. ^a Yield (average of three runs) determined using LCMS relative to an internal standard 1,3,5-tribromobenzene. ^be.r. was determined using HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. ^c 2-bromoquinoline used as a radical precursor.

Next, we investigated the improved performance of the carboxylated photocatalysts compared to Ru(bpy)₃. We initially hypothesized that the difference was due to enhanced binding of the photocatalyst to the protein. We began by conducting steady-state and time-resolved fluorescence quenching experiments and observed static quenching, indicating a binding interaction between the photocatalyst and OYE3. From binding assay experiments (Supplemental Figures 12-15) we found that dissociation constant of Ru(bpy)₂(4,4'-CO₂Hbpy) for OYE 3 to be $K_d = 6.7$ nM, indicating that the carboxylated photocatalyst is a strong protein

binding than Ru(bpy)₃.²⁸ This result suggests that enhanced photocatalyst binding accounts, in part, for the reactivity differences between the two photocatalysts. Next, we questioned whether there was a difference in the reduction potential of the photocatalyst. Indeed, we found that Ru(bpy)₃ was less reducing (Ru^{III} = -1.175 V vs Ag/AgCl in acetonitrile) than Ru(bpy)₂(4,4'-CO₂Hbpy) (Ru^{III} = -1.25 V vs. Ag/AgCl in acetonitrile) (Supplemental Figures 10 and 11), potentially accounting for its improved performance with 2-iodopyridine.

Another striking observation was the correlation between the conversion of 2-iodopyridine and product yield, indicating that the aryl halide was not unproductively consumed throughout the reaction. This observation suggests that the alkene and aryl halide are bound within the protein active site prior to radical formation. To determine whether the presence of alkene accelerates the consumption of aryl halides, we explore the kinetics of the reaction with and without alkene. During the initial rate of the reaction, we found that 2-iodopyridine is consumed 1.6 times faster in the presence of alkene than in its absence. This observation suggests that the alkene either attenuates the reduction potential of the aryl halide or helps to facilitate mesolytic cleavage of the aryl radical anion. This observation is consistent with our observations with α -bromoketones and alkenes.⁵⁵ As the magnitude of this effect is relatively small with aryl halides, we hypothesize that the alkene must bind to the hydrophobic ERED active site with higher affinity than the aryl halide.

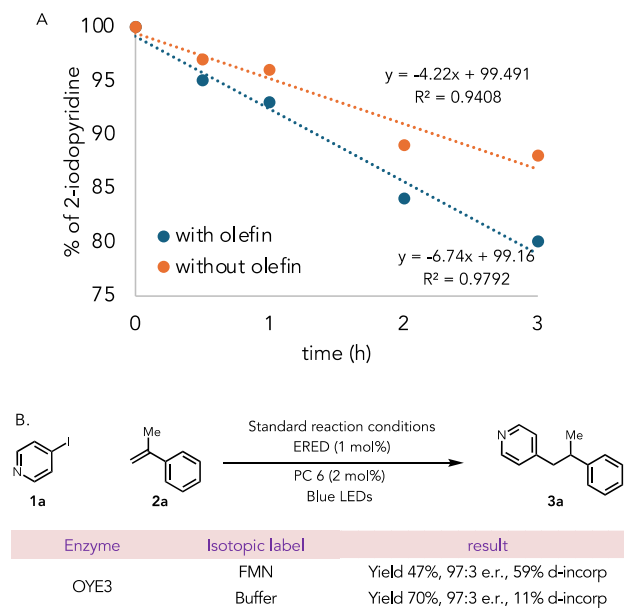


Figure 4. A) Kinetics of 2-iodopyridine consumption with and without alkene. B) Deuterium incorporation study

Finally, we conducted isotope incorporation experiments to determine the mechanism of radical termination. When using 4-iodopyridine with D-Glucose-1-d₁ to isotopically label the N5-position of the flavin cofactor, the product is isolated with 59% deuterium incorporation. In contrast, when using a buffer made with D₂O to isotopically label the O-H bonds of tyrosine phenols, we observe 11% deuterium incorporation. These results suggest that flavin is terminating the reaction via hydrogen atom transfer from flavin.

In conclusion, we have developed a photoenzymatic system to catalyze an asymmetric hydroarylation of alkenes using aryl halides as radical precursors. This work expands the types of reactive intermediates that EREDs can use for alkene

functionalization. We expect this reactivity mode to be compatible with other photoenzymes for other non-natural catalytic functions.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

Experimental procedures, characterization data, NMR spectra, and HPLC traces. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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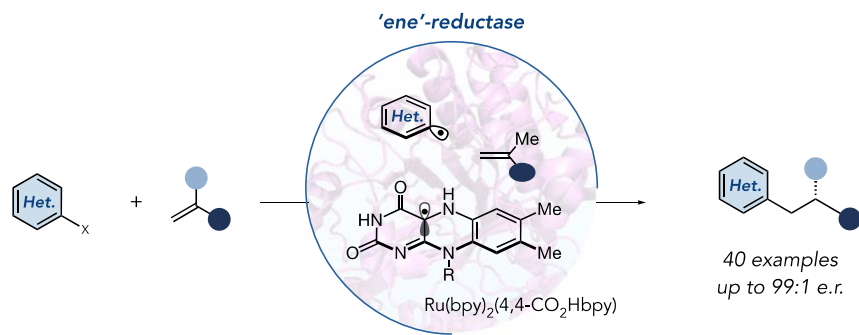
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