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Catalytic Asymmetric C–N Bond Formation: Phosphine-Catalyzed Intra- and Intermolecular γ-Addition of Nitrogen Nucleophiles to Allenoates and Alkynoates

Rylan J. Lundgren,
Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California 91125 (USA)

Ashraf Wilsily,
Department of Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (USA)

Nicolas Marion,
Department of Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (USA)

Cong Ma,
Department of Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (USA)

Ying Kit Chung, and
Department of Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (USA)

Gregory C. Fu*
Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California 91125 (USA)

Abstract

The first examples are described of catalyzed γ-additions of nitrogen nucleophiles to γ-substituted alkynoates or allenoates that proceed with good efficiency, specifically, *intra*- and *inter*molecular processes that employ distinct and useful families of nitrogen nucleophiles (anilines and 2,2,2-trifluoroacetamide), catalyzed by spirophosphine **1**. Furthermore, the first demonstrations are reported of *asymmetric* reactions, affording interesting classes of target molecules such as enantioenriched pyrrolidines, indolines, and γ-amino-α,β-unsaturated carbonyl compounds.

Keywords

amination; asymmetric catalysis; heterocycles; organocatalysis; phosphanes

The use of chiral phosphines as nucleophilic catalysts represents an important second dimension to their utility in catalytic asymmetric synthesis,[1] in addition to their more familiar role as ligands for transition metals.[2] Cognizant of the paucity of general methods for the catalytic enantioselective α-functionalization of carbonyl compounds,[3] we have recently pursued the development of phosphine-catalyzed processes that couple nucleophiles

*Fax: (+) 626-395-8436, gcfu@caltech.edu.

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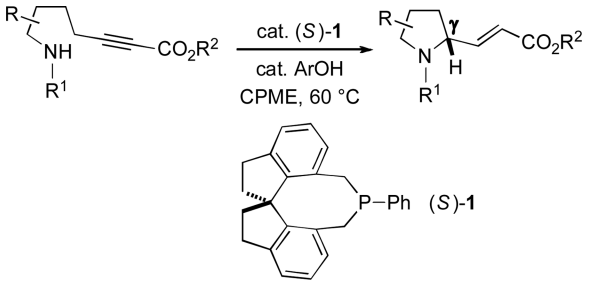
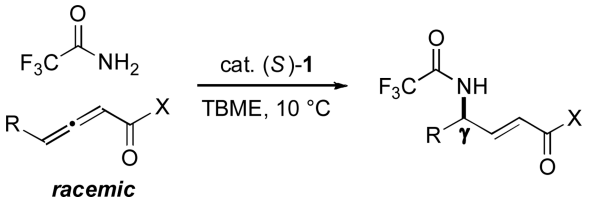
with allenoates and related compounds in the γ-position (Figure 1).[4–6] Given the ready availability of the starting allenes, along with the plethora of methods for stereoselective α- and β-functionalization of α,β-unsaturated carbonyl compounds,[7,8] this approach should provide straightforward access to highly functionalized, stereochemically rich, target molecules (Figure 1).

To date, we have established the viability of this approach with oxygen (*intra*molecular additions to alkynes), carbon (*inter*molecular/allenes), and sulfur (*inter*molecular/allenes) nucleophiles.[4] In view of the biological significance of amines,[9,10] including γ-amino-α,β-unsaturated carbonyl compounds,[11–13] achieving catalytic enantioselective γ-additions with nitrogen nucleophiles is a particularly important objective.[14] However, attempts to effect phosphine-catalyzed γ-addition (even *non*-enantioselective) of nitrogen nucleophiles to γ-substituted 2,3-allenoates and 2-alkynoates (and related compounds) have been unsuccessful (≤30% yield),[15] due in part to the propensity of such electrophiles to isomerize to 1,3-dienes.[16] In this report, we demonstrate that spirophosphine **1** not only can achieve γ C–N bond formation in good yield for the first time, but it can also provide good enantioselectivity, both for intra- and for intermolecular processes [Eq. (1) and Eq. (2); CPME = cyclopentyl methyl ether; TBME = *t*butyl methyl ether].



(1)



(2)

From the outset of our investigation of phosphine-catalyzed γ-additions of nitrogen nucleophiles, we decided to address simultaneously the two key challenges: accomplishing C–N bond formation and controlling the stereochemistry of the γ-carbon. Upon examining an array of conditions for the enantioselective cyclization of the amino-alkyne illustrated in entry 1 of Table 1, we developed a method whereby spirophosphine **1**[17–19] catalyzes the desired intramolecular γ-addition to generate the target pyrrolidine[20,21] with very good enantioselectivity (91% ee) and acceptable yield (68%).

Spirophosphine **1** serves as an effective catalyst for the asymmetric cyclization of an array of amino-alkynes (Table 1; >95:5 E:Z for all reactions).[22] The choice of ester attached to

the alkyne has only a modest impact on the efficiency of the catalytic enantioselective γ-addition process (entries 1–3). Furthermore, substitution on the alkyl chain between the nucleophilic aniline and the electrophilic alkyne is tolerated (entry 4).

If the aromatic ring of the aniline lies between the amine and the alkyne, then spirophosphine-catalyzed asymmetric intramolecular γ-addition of the amine furnishes enantioenriched indolines[23] (Table 1, entries 5–8). Relative to the parent substrate (entry 5), incorporation of an electron-donating or an electron-withdrawing group on the aromatic ring leads to cyclization with similar enantioselectivity, but somewhat lower yield (entries 6 and 7). On the other hand, the presence of a methyl substituent ortho to nitrogen results in more efficient cyclization (entry 8).

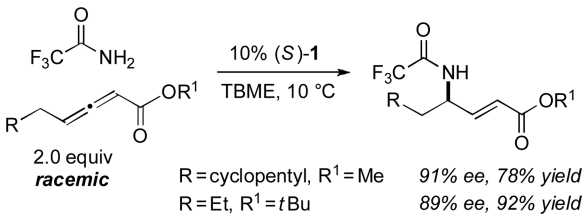
Next, we turned our attention to the challenge of also achieving the first effective phosphine-catalyzed *inter*molecular γ-additions of nitrogen nucleophiles to alkynes/allenes. Unfortunately, our standard conditions for *intra*molecular reactions of anilines (Table 1) were not useful for *inter*molecular additions of anilines to alkynes/allenes (<10% yield).

2,2,2-Trifluoroacetamide is a particularly attractive nitrogen nucleophile, since it can be hydrolyzed under mild conditions to liberate a free amine. Employing our published methods for enantioselective phosphine-catalyzed γ-additions of other families of nucleophiles,[4] we obtained either poor ee (<35%) or poor yield (<10%) for the catalytic asymmetric γ-addition of 2,2,2-trifluoroacetamide to ethyl 2,3-heptadienoate.

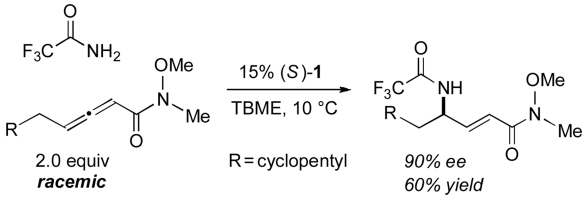
Nevertheless, upon surveying a range of parameters, we developed a new method wherein spirophosphine **1** catalyzes the desired γ-amination process with good enantioselectivity and yield, as well as excellent E/Z selectivity (≥95:5) (Table 2, entry 1); interestingly, although we have found this spirophosphine to be the catalyst of choice for *intra*molecular catalytic asymmetric γ-additions, it had not previously emerged as the optimal phosphine for *inter*molecular reactions.[4] An array of other chiral phosphine catalysts that we have found useful in other contexts furnish significantly lower ee, yield, or E/Z selectivity in this enantioselective γ-amination (entries 2–6). The amount of γ-addition product diminishes when a smaller quantity of allene (entry 7) or catalyst (entry 8) is employed, and a small erosion in ee is observed when the catalytic asymmetric γ-addition is conducted at room temperature, rather than at 10 °C (entry 9).

Under the standard conditions, spirophosphine **1** catalyzes the intermolecular γ-amination of an array of allenoates by 2,2,2-trifluoroacetamide in generally excellent yield, thereby furnishing ready access to γ-amino-α,β-unsaturated esters; at the same time, good ee's are obtained (Table 3).[24] As might be anticipated on the basis of the simplicity of the method and the mild reaction temperature, a variety of functional groups are compatible with the asymmetric γ-addition process, including a terminal alkyne, a Z alkene, an ester, and a sulfur heterocycle. The method is not particularly air- or moisture-sensitive: for example, the addition of 0.5 equiv of water did not erode enantioselectivity or yield, and running the reaction in a capped vial under air had no effect on ee and only a modest impact on yield. On a gram-scale, the γ-amination illustrated in entry 4 of Table 3 proceeds with comparable results (87% ee, 95% yield, ≥95:5 E:Z). The 2,2,2-trifluoroacetyl group can be removed by hydrolysis under mild conditions.[25]

This catalytic asymmetric α-amination process is not limited to additions of 2,2,2-trifluoroacetamide to carbethoxy-substituted allenoates. Thus, the method can be applied to reactions with a methyl and a *t*butyl ester, as well as with a Weinreb amide, in ~90% ee [Eq. (3) and Eq. (4)].



(3)



(4)

A preliminary mechanistic investigation revealed that product ee correlates linearly with catalyst ee and that the rate law is positive order in allene and catalyst, but negative order in nucleophile. Although ^{31}P NMR spectroscopy studies did not provide clear evidence for a catalyst–nucleophile adduct, several phosphorus-containing species (potentially, phosphonium intermediates) in addition to free spirophosphine **1** were observed during the course of the γ-addition process.

In this report, we have provided the first examples of catalyzed γ-additions of nitrogen nucleophiles to γ-substituted alkynoates or allenoates that proceed with good efficiency, specifically, *intra*- and *inter*molecular processes that employ distinct and useful families of nitrogen nucleophiles (anilines and 2,2,2-trifluoroacetamide), catalyzed by spirophosphine **1**. Furthermore, we have furnished the first demonstration of *asymmetric* reactions, affording interesting classes of target molecules such as enantioenriched pyrrolidines, indolines, and γ-amino-α,β-unsaturated carbonyl compounds. This investigation thus adds an important new family of nucleophiles (nitrogen) to those (carbon, oxygen, and sulfur) that have previously been shown to engage in phosphine-catalyzed asymmetric γ-additions. Ongoing studies are directed at further expanding this strategy for the rapid generation of functionalized carbonyl compounds.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

Acknowledgments

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4. a) Intramolecular additions of oxygen nucleophiles to alkynes: Chung YK, Fu GC. Angew. Chem., Int. Ed. 2009; 48:2225–2227.; b) Intermolecular additions of carbon nucleophiles to allenes: Smith SW, Fu GC. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2009; 131:14231–14233. [PubMed: 19772285] Sinisi R, Sun J, Fu GC. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 2010; 107:20652–20654. [PubMed: 20624987] ; c) Intermolecular additions of sulfur nucleophiles to allenes: Sun J, Fu GC. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2010; 132:4568–4569. [PubMed: 20222657] Fujiwara Y, Sun J, Fu GC. Chem. Sci. 2011; 2:2196–2198. [PubMed: 22216403]
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14. For complementary methods for catalytic asymmetric γ amination that employ a nitrogen *electrophile*, see: Poulsen TB, Alemparte C, Jørgensen KA. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2005; 127:11614–11615. [PubMed: 16104733] Bertelsen S, Marigo M, Brandes S, Dinér P, Jørgensen KA. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2006; 128:12973–12980. [PubMed: 17002394] Wang J, Chen J, Kee CW, Tan C-H. Angew. Chem., Int. Ed. 2012; 51:2382–2386.
15. We are not aware of any reports of phosphine-catalyzed intramolecular γ-additions of nitrogen nucleophiles to γ-substituted 2,3-allenoates or 2-alkynoates, or of any enantioselective intra- or intermolecular processes. For reports of non-asymmetric intermolecular additions to γ-substituted electrophiles, all of which proceed in ≤30% yield, see: Trost BM, Dake GR. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1997; 119:7595–7596.: 9% yield; Liu B, Davis R, Joshi B, Reynolds DW. J. Org. Chem. 2002; 67:4595–4598. [PubMed: 12076163] : 17% and 28% yield; Virieux D, Guillouzic A-F, Cristau H-J. Tetrahedron. 2006; 62:3710–3720.: 30% yield.
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17. For the development of spirophosphine **1** as a chiral ligand for metal-catalyzed enantioselective processes, see: Zhu S-F, Yang Y, Wang L-X, Liu B, Zhou Q-L. Org. Lett. 2005; 7:2333–2335. [PubMed: 15932191] Xie J-H, Zhou Q-L. Acc. Chem. Res. 2008; 41:581–593. [PubMed: 18311931]

18. For the first use of spirophosphine **1** as a chiral nucleophilic catalyst, see Reference 4a. Spirophosphine **1** is not highly susceptible to oxidation: after exposure of the solid to air for three days at room temperature, no phosphine oxide is observed by NMR spectroscopy.

19. Spirophosphine **1** is commercially available.

20. For leading references to the enantioselective synthesis of pyrrolidines, see: Royer J. Asymmetric Synthesis of Nitrogen Heterocycles. 2009WeinheimWiley–VCH

21. For a recent report of non-enantioselective phosphine-catalyzed intramolecular additions of nitrogen nucleophiles to allenoates that lack a γ-substituent, see: Andrews IP, Blank BR, Kwon O. Chem. Commun. 2012; 48:5373–5375.

22. Under our standard conditions: the ee of the product was constant during the course of a γ-addition process; in the absence of spirophosphine **1**, no reaction was observed; the phosphine oxide of **1** does not serve as a catalyst for γ-addition; six-membered ring formation was less efficient; γ-addition to an alkyne substituted with a Weinreb amide proceeded in excellent ee but modest yield; the 2,4-dimethoxyphenol enhances the yield, not the enantioselectivity.

23. For a review and leading references on the synthesis of indolines, see: Liu D, Zhao G, Xiang L. Eur. J. Org. Chem. 2010:3975–3984.

24. (a) Under our standard conditions: the ee was constant during the course of a γ-addition; the carboxylic acid and the phenol additives that we examined were deleterious with respect to ee, yield, or E:Z selectivity; in the absence of spirophosphine **1**, no reaction was observed; the phosphine oxide of **1** does not serve as a catalyst for γ-addition; an allenoate with a γ-isopropyl substituent, a 2-alkynoate, an allenyl phosphonate, and an allenyl nitrile were not suitable electrophiles; 1,3-diene is a side product. (b) In a preliminary study, we have determined that spirophosphine **1** can catalyze the γ-addition of $TsNH_2$ to an allenoate in 68% ee and 75% yield (unoptimized); further exploration revealed that phosphepine **2** can achieve an array of γ-additions of $TsNH_2$ with ~85% ee and ~85% yield (~85:15 E:Z; toluene, r.t.).

25. For leading references, see: Spencer C, Balsells J, Li H. Tetrahedron Lett. 2009; 50:1010–1012.

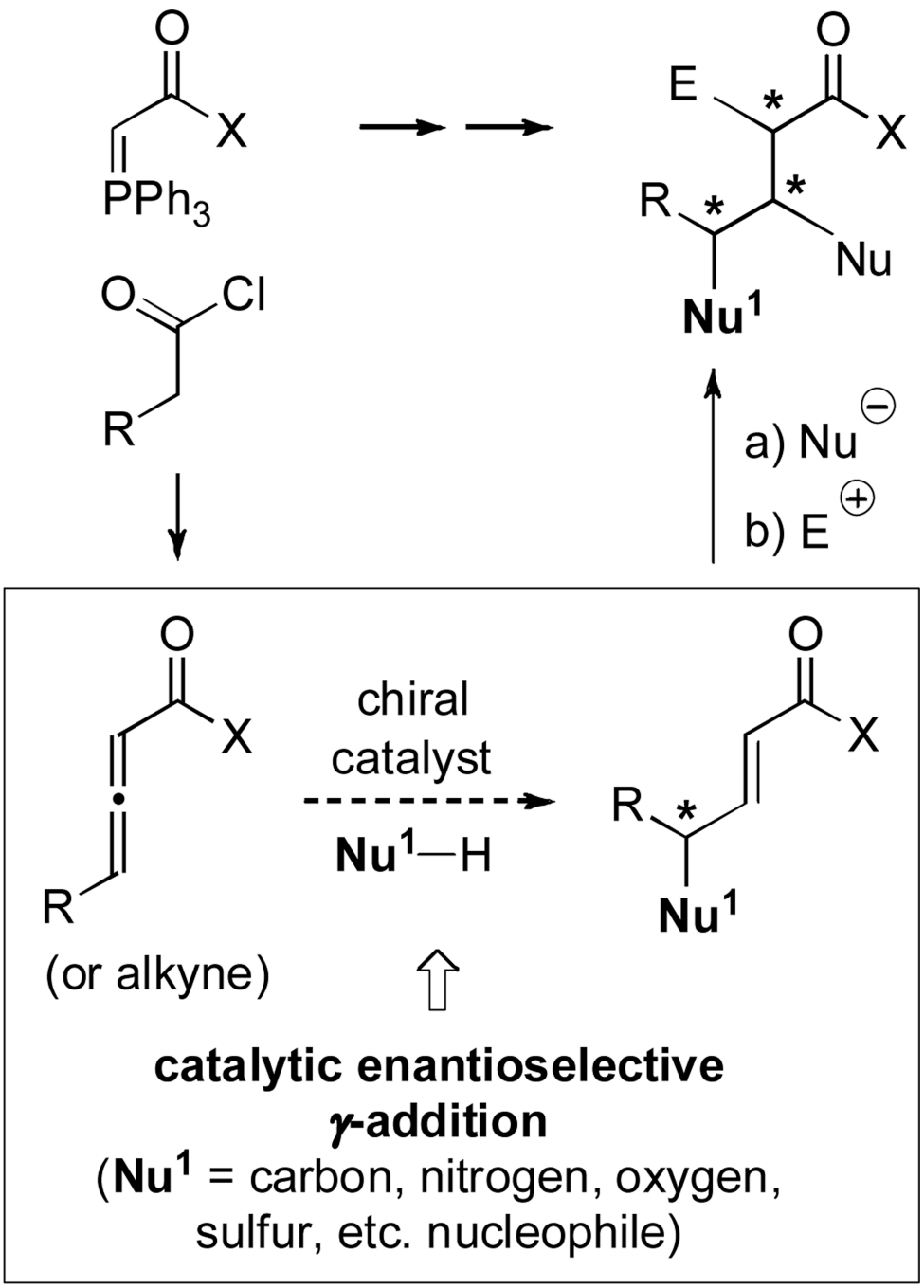
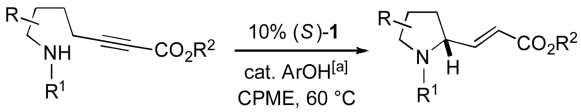
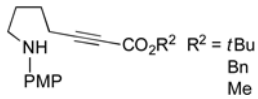
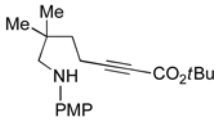
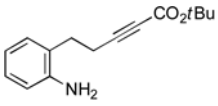
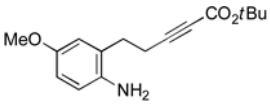
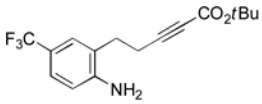
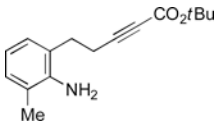


Figure 1.
Catalytic enantioselective γ-additions to allenes: Efficient access to highly functionalized, stereochemically rich, carbonyl compounds.

Table 1

Catalytic enantioselective synthesis of pyrrolidines and indolines via intramolecular γ-additions of nitrogen nucleophiles to alkynoates.



entry	substrate	ee (%)	yield (%)[b]
1	 R² = *t*Bu	91	68
2	Bn	95	70
3	Me	94	78
4		94	60
5		90	55
6		89	44
7		88	44
8		88	67

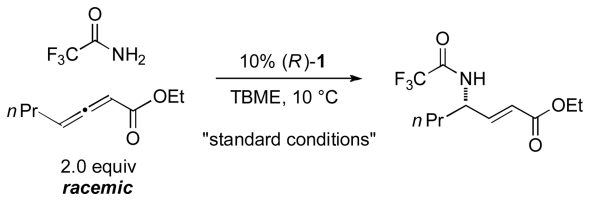
All data are the average of two experiments. PMP = *p*-methoxyphenyl.

[a] For entries 1–4, cat. ArOH = 50% 2,4-dimethoxyphenol. For entries 5–8, cat. ArOH = 20% 2-fluoro-6-methoxyphenol.

[b] Yield of purified product.

Table 2

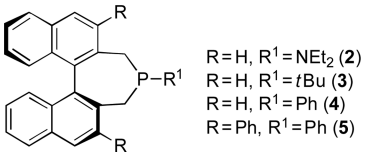
Catalytic enantioselective *inter*molecular γ-addition of a nitrogen nucleophile to an allene: Effect of reaction param eters.

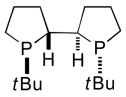


entry	change from the "standard conditions"	ee (%)	yield (%)[a]
1	none	87	90 [≥95:5]
2	**2** instead of **1**	80	88 [65:35]
3	**3** instead of **1**	9	52 [≥95:5]
4	**4** instead of **1**	64	89 [90:10]
5	**5** instead of **1**	84	64 [60:40]
6	**6** instead of **1**	27	96 [85:15]
7	1.0, instead of 2.0, equiv of allene	88	52 [≥95:5]
8	5%, instead of 10%, **1**	88	39 [≥95:5]
9	room temperature instead of 10 °C	82	90 [≥95:5]

All data are the average of two experiments.

[a]The yield was determined through ^{1}H NMR analysis with the aid of an internal standard. The E:Z ratio, also determined through ^{1}H NMR analysis, is provided in brackets.

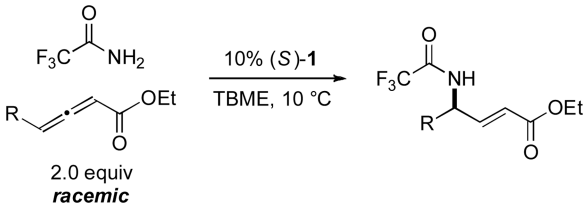




TangPhos (**6**)

Table 3

Catalytic enantioselective *inter*molecular γ-addition of 2,2,2-trifluoroacetamide to allenoates: Scope.



entry	R	ee (%)	yield (%)[a]
1	Me	86	89
2	*n*Pr	87	90
3	*i*Bu	88	92
4	$(CH_2)_2Ph$	88	94
5	$(CH_2)_4OBn$	89	87
6	$(CH_2)_3$—≡	89	86
7	$(CH_2)_6$, Oct*n*	87	88
8	$(CH_2)_2CO_2Me$	82	68
9	$(CH_2)_2$, S	86	87

All data are the average of two experiments.

[a]Yield of purified product (E:Z >95:5).