

Late-Stage Diversification of Biarylphosphines through Rhodium(I)-Catalyzed C–H Bond Alkenylation with Internal Alkynes

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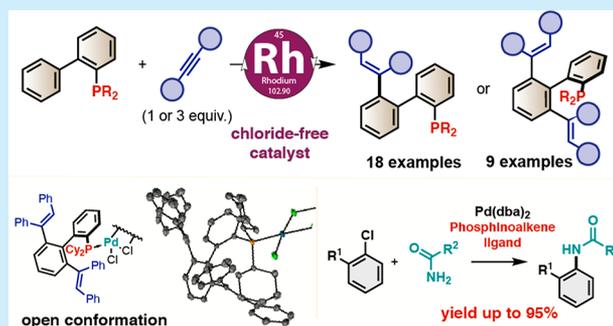
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ABSTRACT: We report herein P(III)-directed C–H bond alkenylation of (dialkyl)- and (diaryl)biarylphosphines using internal alkynes. Chloride-free $[\text{Rh}(\text{OAc})(\text{COD})]_2$ acts as a better catalyst than commercially available $[\text{RhCl}(\text{COD})]_2$. Conditions were developed to control the mono- and difunctionalization depending on the alkyne stoichiometry. One of these novel bisalkenylated (dialkyl)biarylphosphines was employed for the preparation of a palladium(II) complex, and some of these functionalized ligands outperformed their corresponding unfunctionalized phosphines in Pd-catalyzed amidation with sterically hindered aryl chlorides.



Phosphine ligands play a significant role in catalysis, tuning the reactivity at the metal center through their modifiable steric and electronic properties.¹ (Dialkyl)- or (diaryl)-biarylphosphines such as JohnPhos and XPhos ligands are widely employed in transition-metal (e.g., Pd or Au) catalysis because of their unique structural features displaying weak metal–arene interactions.² The presence of bulky substituents (i.e., *i*Pr) at both *ortho*' positions avoids cyclometalation and leads to more active catalysts (Figure 1). However, the

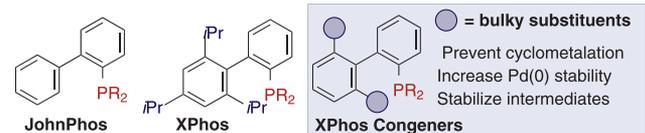


Figure 1. Relevant and structural features of biarylphosphines.

traditional synthetic approaches for biarylphosphines involve multiple steps with polar organometallic reagents, making it challenging to produce banks of multifunctional ligands to search for optimal catalytic activities. Recently, late-stage diversification via C–H bond functionalization has been comfortably ensconced to optimize the design of pharmaceuticals³ and organic materials,⁴ but it has barely been employed for generation of ligand banks.⁵ Since the discovery by Hartwig that regioselective C–H bond functionalization can be directed by P(III) atom,⁶ this strategy has been applied to quickly modify biaryl phosphines by C–H bond borylation,⁷ arylation,⁸ and silylation.⁹ In 2019, our group reported *ortho*'-C–H bond alkylation of biarylphosphines, allowing the preparation of 40 multifunctional phosphines with unique efficiency for catalytic carboxylation reactions (Figure 2a).¹⁰ At the same time, Shi's

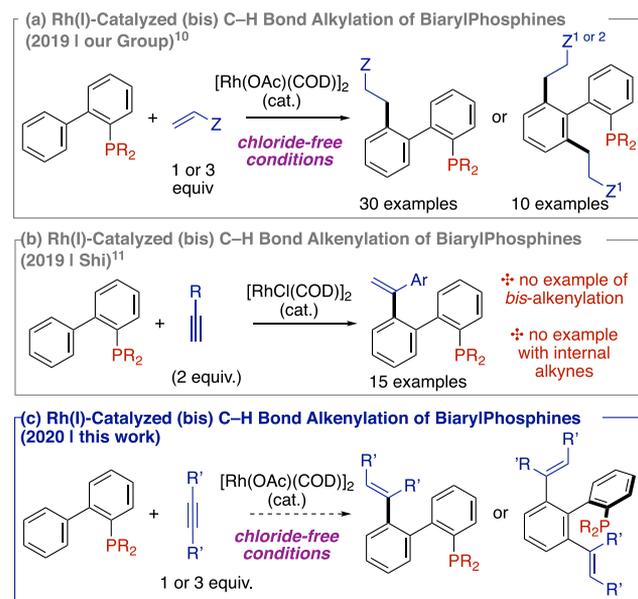


Figure 2. Late-stage diversification of biarylphosphines.

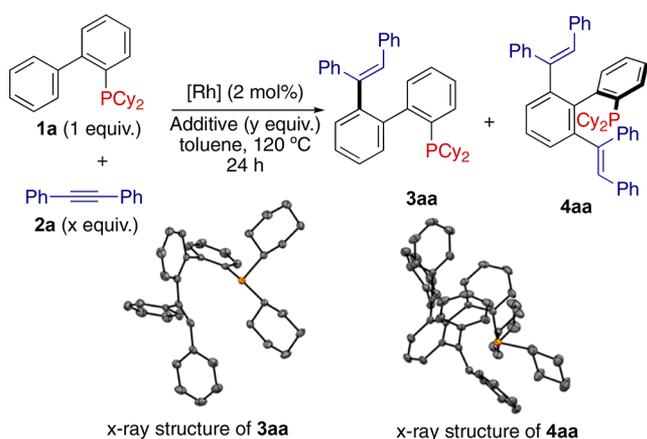
group reported similar reactions, albeit using $[\text{RhCl}(\text{COD})]_2$.¹¹ They also showed that terminal alkynes can be

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employed, leading to *ortho'*-monoalkenylated biarylphosphines (Figure 2b).¹¹ In contrast to alkenes, with which bis-*ortho'*-dialkylation easily occurs, only monoalkenylation happened with terminal alkynes. As there was no example of mono- or dialkenylation with internal alkynes, we investigated Rh(III) and Rh(I) catalytic systems to reach this target (Figure 2c).

We selected Cy-JohnPhos (1a) and diphenylacetylene (2a) as model substrates to investigate the C–H bond alkenylation directed by the P(III) atom (Table 1). As the first attempt, we

Table 1. Optimization of the Reaction Conditions



[Rh]	Additive	3aa (%)	4aa (%)	
1	Cp*Rh(CH ₃ CN) ₃ (SbF ₆) ₂	PivOH (5)	0	0
2	[Cp*RhCl ₂] ₂	–	0	0
3	[RhCl(COD)] ₂	–	23	0
4	RhCl(PPh ₃) ₃	–	10	0
5	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	–	71	21
6	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	K ₂ CO ₃ (0.25)	75	18
7	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	K ₃ PO ₄ (0.25)	32	3
8	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	KOAc (0.25)	86	8
9	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	AcONa (0.25)	84	11
10	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	PivOK (0.25)	72	18
11 ^[a]	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	KOAc (0.25)	55	43
12 ^[b]	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	KOAc (0.25)	30	62
13 ^[b,c]	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	KOAc (0.25)	15	75
14 ^[b,c]	[Rh(OAc)(COD)] ₂	KOAc (0.5)	10	78

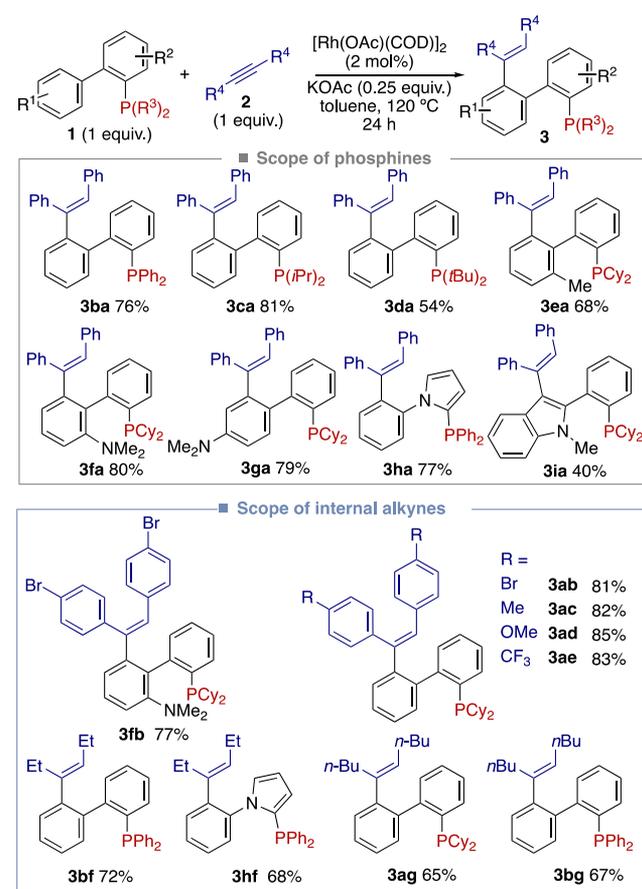
[a] 2 equiv. of 2a; [b] 3 equiv. of 2a, [c] 4 mol% of Rh catalyst

evaluated the conditions described by Fagnou for the hydroarylation of internal alkynes (i.e., 2 mol % Cp*Rh(CH₃CN)₃(SbF₆)₂ associated with PivOH in toluene),¹² but no reaction occurred (entry 1). The use of [Cp*RhCl₂]₂ as the catalyst also failed to deliver the functionalized phosphine 3aa or 4aa (entry 2), likely because of strong P(III)–Rh(III) bonds. We then evaluated Rh(I) catalysts, as we and others previously demonstrated their efficiency in P(III)-directed C–H bond activation/functionalization.^{7d,8,10,11} Moreover, Rh(I) catalysts have also been employed in alkenylations of arene C(sp²)–H bonds with alkynes using a bidentate directing group¹³ or a nitrogen group.¹⁴ Shi's conditions for alkenylation with terminal alkyne afforded 3aa in only 23% yield (entry 3). The use of Wilkinson's catalyst [RhCl(PPh₃)₃] gave a lower yield (entry 4). However, higher activity was observed using 2 mol % chloride-free [Rh(OAc)(COD)]₂ as the catalyst, which afforded monoalkenylated phosphine 3aa in 71% yield along with a 21% yield of bisalkenylated phosphine 4aa (entry 5). Interestingly, in the presence of a base the formation of the bis-*ortho'*-alkenylated phosphine 4aa decreased, and the best result

was obtained using 0.25 equiv of KOAc, which afforded 3aa in 86% isolated yield (entries 6–10). To get the bis-*ortho'*-alkenylated phosphine 4aa selectively, we increased the amount of 2a (entries 11 and 12). In the presence of 3 equiv of 2a and 4 mol % Rh catalyst, 4aa was isolated in 75% yield (entry 13). With 0.5 equiv of KOAc, the isolated yield can rise up to 78% (entry 14).

Having determined the best reaction conditions for the mono- and dialkenylation of biarylphosphines through P(III)-assisted C–H bond cleavage, we turned our attention to the scope of the reaction. First, we investigated the monofunctionalization using 2 mol % [Rh(OAc)(COD)]₂ with 25 mol % KOAc in toluene at 120 °C, and biarylphosphine/alkyne ratio of 1:1 (Scheme 1). The reaction of diphenylacetylene with

Scheme 1. Scope of Rhodium(I)-Catalyzed *ortho'*-C–H Bond Alkenylation of Biarylphosphines with Alkynes



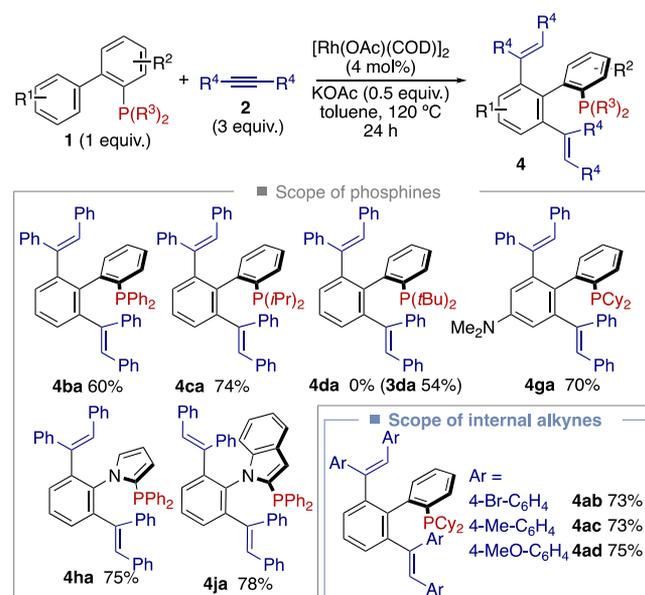
biphenyls bearing a diphenylphosphino or diisopropylphosphino group afforded the corresponding phosphine–alkene ligands 3ba and 3ca in 76% and 81% yield, respectively. In contrast to the previous report on Rh(I)-catalyzed hydroarylation of terminal alkynes,¹¹ in which sterically hindered *t*-Bu-JohnPhos (1d) is not reactive, the reaction with diphenylacetylene led to the formation of monoalkenylated phosphine 3da in 54% yield. *Ortho'*-substituted biarylphosphines such as MePhos (1e) and DavePhos (1f) also underwent C–H bond alkenylation at the *ortho'* position to afford phosphines 3ea and 3fa in good yields. Rh(I)-catalyzed *ortho'*-C–H bond alkenylation of 2-dicyclohexylphosphino-4-(*N,N*-dimethylamino)-1,1'-biphenyl (1g) afforded 3ga in 79% yield. These reaction conditions are tolerant of heteroaromatic

moieties. Indeed, cataCXium PCy with an *N*-phenylpyrrole scaffold—developed by Beller's group for cross-couplings of aryl chlorides¹⁵—is alkenylated on the phenyl ring to provide phosphine–alkene **3ha** in 77% yield. CM-Phos—developed by Kwong for cross-coupling reactions with aryl mesylates¹⁶—undergoes indolyl C3–H bond alkenylation to afford **3ia** in moderate yield.

Next, we investigated the reactivity of other internal alkynes. The functionalization of DavePhos (**1f**) with 1,2-bis(4-bromophenyl)ethyne afforded phosphine **3fb** in 77% yield without cleavage of the C–Br bonds, which could be further employed to generate more diversity via cross-coupling reactions. Hydroarylation of 1,2-bis(4-bromophenyl)ethyne, 1,2-di-*p*-tolylethyne, 1,2-bis(4-methoxyphenyl)ethyne, and 1,2-bis(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)ethyne with JohnPhos (**1a**) efficiently occurred to produce **3ab–ae** in good yields. Less reactive hex-3-yne (**2f**) and dec-5-yne (**2g**) were also suitable substrates in C–H bond alkenylation, affording the novel phosphine–alkene ligands **3bf**, **3hf**, **3ag**, and **3bg** in good yields. However, the use of nonsymmetrical alkynes (e.g., ethyl 3-phenylpropionate or 1-phenyl-1-propyne) led to nonharvestable mixtures of isomers.

We then explored the difunctionalization of biarylphosphine *ortho'*-C–H bonds using an excess amount of internal alkyne and 4 mol % [Rh(OAc)(COD)]₂ with 50 mol % KOAc in toluene at 120 °C (Scheme 2). The steric factor of the

Scheme 2. Scope of Rhodium(I)-Catalyzed Twofold *ortho'*,*ortho'*-C–H Bond Alkenylation of Biarylphosphines with Alkynes

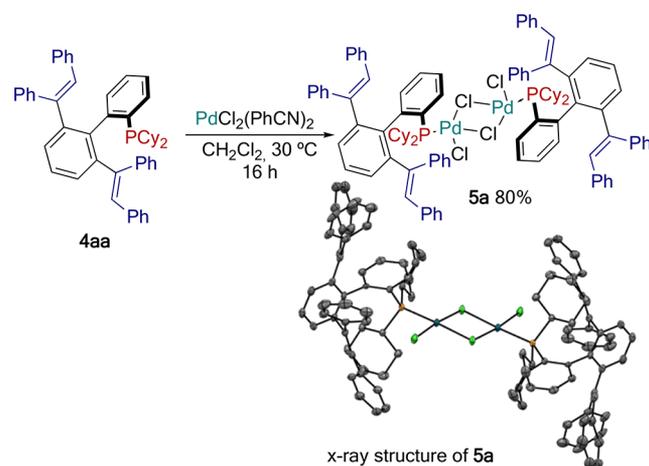


phosphorus substituent appears to be critical. The diphenylphosphino and diisopropylphosphino groups were efficient directing groups in the bis-*ortho'*-alkenylation, affording **4ba** and **4ca** in 60% and 74% yield, respectively. In contrast, the reaction with *t*Bu-JohnPhos (**1d**) failed to deliver the difunctionalized phosphine **4da**, and we observed only the formation of monofunctionalized phosphine **3da** in 54% yield. The introduction of a strong electron-donating group such as NMe₂ did not affect the reactivity, as the dialkenylated product **4ga** was isolated in 70% yield. The twofold C–H bond activation/functionalization of cataCXium PCy (**1h**) afforded

4ha in 75% yield. CataCXium PInCy with the *N,N*-phenylindole scaffold **1j** was bisalkenylated on the phenyl unit to provide phosphine–bisalkene **4ja** in 78% yield. Bis-C–H bond alkenylations of **1a** were also carried out with other symmetrical *para*-substituted diarylacetylenes (i.e., R = Br, Me, OMe), affording **4ab–ad** in 73–75% yield.

To estimate the coordination ability of phosphine **4aa**, we prepared palladium(II) complex **5a** (Scheme 3). Mixing ligand

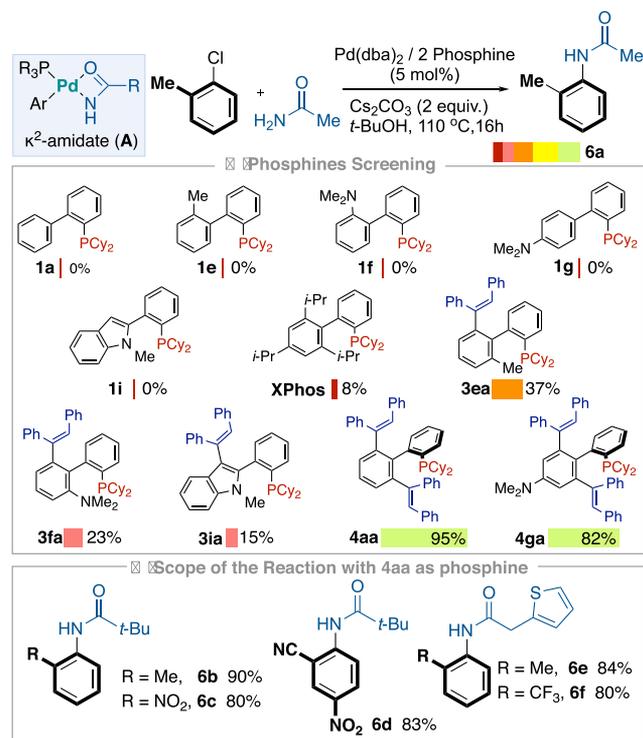
Scheme 3. Stabilization of Pd(II) with Bulky Phosphine Ligand **4aa**



4aa and PdCl₂(PhCN)₂ in CH₂Cl₂ at room temperature led to the complete formation of complex **5a**, as indicated by ³¹P{¹H} NMR spectroscopy with a downfield shift of the phosphorus atom from δ = −7.7 ppm for the free phosphine to δ = 67.0 ppm for the complex. In the X-ray crystallographic structure, complex **5a** was found to have a dimeric structure with a chloro bridge unit and a distorted square-planar coordination geometry. The Pd–Pd distance of 3.50 Å was somewhat longer than that in the corresponding SPhos–palladium compound (2.24 Å), and the Pd–P distance of 2.26 Å was similar to that in the SPhos–palladium compound (2.25 Å). In contrast to JohnPhos and SPhos, which adopted a closed conformation,¹⁷ **5a** presents an open conformation, i.e., the secondary aryl ring points away from the metal center, avoiding a metal–arene interaction. This conformation switch might be due to the introduction of the very bulky 1,2-diphenylvinyl substituents.

Finally, we demonstrated the positive effect of the introduction of the alkenyl group on biarylphosphines by comparing the catalytic activities of a couple of these novel (bis)alkenylated (dialkyl)biarylphosphines with their parent phosphines that are often used in Pd-catalyzed cross-coupling reactions. Aryl chlorides are much less reactive substrates in Pd-catalyzed cross-coupling reactions, but they are more abundant and less expensive than the bromide or iodide equivalents. Their cross-coupling with amides remains challenging, as specific phosphine ligands have to be designed to promote the oxidative addition to the aryl chloride and reductive elimination of an amidate ligand from the Pd(II) center, which can generate κ²-amidate palladium intermediate complexes (**A** in Scheme 4), resulting in inhibition of the reductive elimination and thus the catalytic efficiency.¹⁸ We selected electron-rich and sterically hindered 2-chlorotoluene and acetamide as model substrates to evaluate the potential of our bifunctional biarylphosphines in Pd-catalyzed amidation

Scheme 4. Application of Bisalkenylated (Dialkyl)biarylphosphines in the Pd-Catalyzed Amidation of Aryl Chlorides



(Scheme 4). In the presence of 2.5 mol % Pd(dba)₂/2 phosphine and 2 equiv of Cs₂CO₃ in *t*-BuOH, the commercially available (dicyclohexyl)biarylphosphines [JohnPhos (1a), MePhos (1e), DavePhos (1f), DavePhos analogue 1g, cataCXium PInCy (1i), and XPhos] were almost inactive. Interestingly, the use of phosphine–alkene hybrid ligands 3ea, 3fa, and 3ia gave the desired *N*-arylamide 6a in 15–37% yield. Surprisingly higher yields were observed using the phosphines 4aa and 4ga bearing two alkenyl units, leading to the formation of 6a in 95% and 82% yield, respectively. This positive rise of activity is expected to arise from the presence of the very bulky alkenyl group at both *ortho*' positions, which might stabilize Pd intermediates by non-covalent interactions¹⁹ or/and may avoid the formation of κ²-amidate palladium intermediate complexes (A). Using the most active bifunctional phosphine, 4aa, we confirmed that C–N bond cross-coupling nicely occurred, affording arylamides 6b–f in high yields (Scheme 4, bottom).

In summary, we have reported the first example of C–H bond alkenylation of aromatic C–H bonds of biarylphosphines with internal alkynes through P(III)-directed C–H bond cleavage with Rh^I(OAc) catalysts. The use of KOAc in association with the chloride-free Rh(I) catalyst allowed monofunctionalization or difunctionalization depending on the stoichiometry of the reaction. A new class of phosphine–alkene ligands with different steric and electronic properties were obtained in good yields. The introduction of these very bulky vinyl substituents induces a conformation switch of the palladium complex from a closed form to an open form. A significant consequence for the catalytic performance is that monophosphines that have typically been ineffective in the amidation of aryl chlorides were morphed into ligands that create highly active palladium catalysts in amidation of *ortho*-substituted aryl chlorides. Applications of the developed ligand

libraries and more detailed coordination studies are currently ongoing in our laboratory.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.orglett.0c02023>.

Additional procedures and data, including characterizations, crystal structures, and NMR results (PDF)

Accession Codes

CCDC 1968419, 1968421, and 1982983 contain the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif, or by emailing data_request@ccdc.cam.ac.uk, or by contacting The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, U.K.; fax: +44 1223 336033.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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