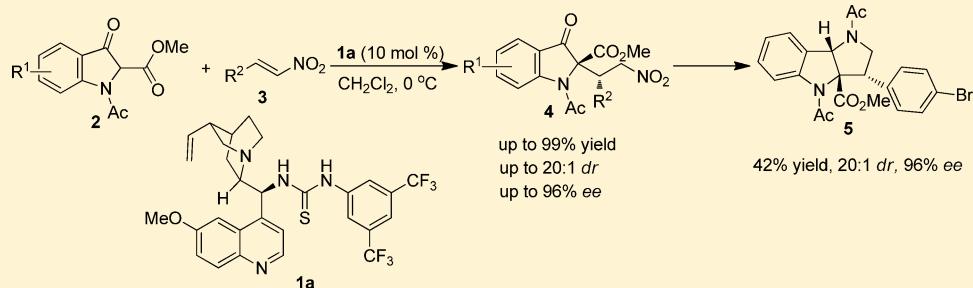


Organocatalytic Asymmetric Michael Addition of Oxindoles to Nitroolefins for the Synthesis of 2,2-Disubstituted Oxindoles Bearing Adjacent Quaternary and Tertiary Stereocenters

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Supporting Information



ABSTRACT: A bifunctional thiourea-catalyzed Michael addition of activated indolin-3-ones to nitroolefins has been developed. The synthetically useful 2,2-disubstituted indolin-3-one derivatives with vicinal chiral quaternary–tertiary stereocenters were obtained in high yields with excellent stereoselectivities. The adduct can be readily transformed into a structurally interesting heterocyclic architecture by means of further synthetic elaboration.

Indolin-3-ones with a quaternary stereocenter at the 2-position are commonly found in a wide range of biologically active natural alkaloids such as brevianamide A,¹ austamide,² and fluorouridine³ (Figure 1). Thus, the development of

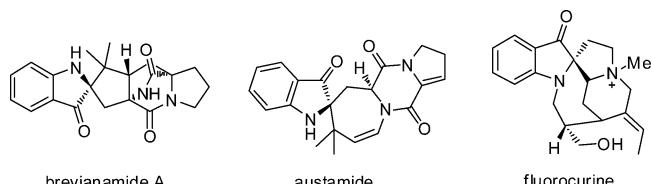


Figure 1. Biologically active molecules containing indolin-3-ones with a quaternary stereocenter at the 2-position.

efficient methods for the construction of functionalized indolin-3-one building blocks with structural complexity and skeleton diversity would provide new opportunities for the synthesis of new kinds of biologically active molecules. Despite the fruitful achievements toward the enantioselective construction of quaternary carbon-incorporated indolin-2-ones,⁴ the catalytic asymmetric synthesis of indolin-3-ones with a quaternary center at the 2-position had been rarely explored, and it remained a challenging task.⁵

The Michael addition reaction is one of the most fundamental, yet important, methods for carbon–carbon bond formation in modern organic synthesis. Over the past decade, various organocatalytic asymmetric Michael addition reactions have been developed by employing new catalysts and

activation modes via efficient combination of diverse nucleophiles and electrophiles.^{6,7} Although the organocatalytic Michael addition of highly reactive trisubstituted carbon nucleophiles to nitroalkenes to generate quaternary carbons are well-documented,⁸ to our knowledge, the organocatalytic strategy exploiting 2-substituted indolin-3-ones as pronucleophiles to construct a quaternary carbon at the 2-position in a highly stereocontrolled manner has not been reported. With our ongoing interest in the study of indolin-3-one chemistry,⁹ we report here an efficient method for the synthesis of 2,2-disubstituted oxindoles bearing adjacent quaternary and tertiary stereocenters via a bifunctional thiourea-catalyzed the Michael addition reaction of methyl 1-acetyl-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate¹⁰ to nitroalkenes.

Initially, the Michael addition reaction of methyl 1-acetyl-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate 2 with β -nitrostyrene 3a in the presence of catalyst 1a (10 mol %) in toluene was investigated.¹¹ To our delight, the Michael addition reaction proceeded smoothly to afford the desired product 4a in excellent yield and stereoselectivity (91% yield, 94% ee, 20:1 dr) after 30 h (Table 1, entry 1). Various promising bifunctional base/Brønsted acid catalysts were tested (Table 1, entries 2–6), and it was found that the cinchonine- and quinidine-derived bifunctional thiourea 1b, 1f, Takemoto catalyst 1d, and amino acid-derived catalyst 1c could also

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Table 1. Screening of the Reaction Conditions^a

entry	cat.	solvent	R ³	R ⁴	T (°C)	time (h)	yield (%)	dr ^b	ee (%) ^c
1	1a	toluene	Me	Ac	0	30	91	20:1	94
2	1b	toluene	Me	Ac	0	30	91	20:1	-92
3	1c	toluene	Me	Ac	0	30	93	20:1	92
4	1d	toluene	Me	Ac	0	30	92	20:1	-91
5	1e	toluene	Me	Ac	0	30	90	20:1	55
6	1f	toluene	Me	Ac	0	30	92	20:1	-93
7	1a	CH ₂ Cl ₂	Me	Ac	0	24	90	20:1	95
8	1a	THF	Me	Ac	0	72	<30	20:1	79
9	1a	CHCl ₃	Me	Ac	0	24	90	20:1	94
10	1a	CH ₃ OH	Me	Ac	0	42	84	20:1	11
11	1a	CH ₂ Cl ₂	Me	Ac	-10	42	91	20:1	94
12	1a	CH ₂ Cl ₂	Me	Boc	0	42	87	20:1	95
13	1a	CH ₂ Cl ₂	i-Pr	Ac	0	42	91	20:1	91

^aUnless otherwise noted, the reactions were carried out with 2 (0.1 mmol), 3a (0.2 mmol), and catalyst 1 (0.01 mmol) in solvent (1.0 mL) at 0 °C.^bDetermined by ¹H NMR spectroscopic analysis of the crude reaction mixture. ^cDetermined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase.

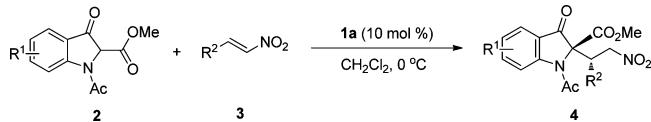
give good results albeit with slightly lower enantioselectivities in contrast to catalyst 1a. However, primary aminothiourea catalyst 1e gave a significantly decreased enantioinduction. Subsequently, the solvent effect was investigated, and CH₂Cl₂ was identified as the solvent of choice in comparison with the protonic and polar solvents (Table 1, entries 7–10). When the reaction temperature was dropped to -10 °C, no obviously beneficial effect on the stereoselectivity and yield was observed (Table 1, entry 11). Further optimization with modified substrates also revealed that bulky isopropyl ester and *N*-Boc-protected nucleophile were also suitable reaction partners.

With the reaction conditions optimized, we next examined the substrate scope of the reaction (Table 2). The results showed that a wide range of nitroalkenes could be used in this reaction. Aromatic groups bearing electron-withdrawing or -donating groups were well tolerated as well as aromatic rings substituted in the *para*, *meta* and *ortho* positions. A heteroaromatic group, such as furan, could also be successfully employed to afford the desired product. Notably, despite the structural difference of nitroalkenes, the Michael adducts were obtained with excellent yields, dr values, and ee values in most cases. However, the steric hindrance of the *o*-methoxy-substituted aromatic ring of nitroolefin resulted in lower diastereoselectivity compared with other substituted aromatic substrates (8:1 dr, Table 2, entry 10). Alkyl substrates, on the other hand, did not perform well in the reaction; *n*-butyl-substituted nitroolefin proceeded slowly under the optimized reaction conditions (Table 2, entry 17). However, with a

modification to our optimal method by raising the reaction temperature to 20 °C, the Michael reaction proceeded well to give the product in 87% yield, 20:1 dr, albeit with 75% ee. Furthermore, indolin-2-ones with different substituents on the aryl ring were also tolerated and afforded the desired products with good results (Table 2, entries 18–20). The absolute and relative configuration of the product was determined based on single-crystal X-ray diffraction of 4e (see the Supporting Information).¹²

As a further example illustrative of the power of this reaction, the product 4e was readily converted to a structurally diverse heterocyclic architecture. When 4e was reduced with Zn/HCl in EtOH followed by treatment with AcCl/Et₃N in CH₂Cl₂, the desired substituted hexahydropyrrolo[3,2-*b*]indole 5 was obtained in moderate yields and high enantioselectivity (Scheme 1). The structure and configuration of 5 was determined by X-ray diffraction (see the Supporting Information).¹²

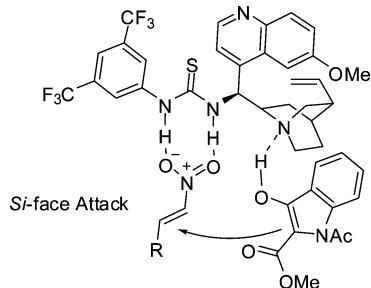
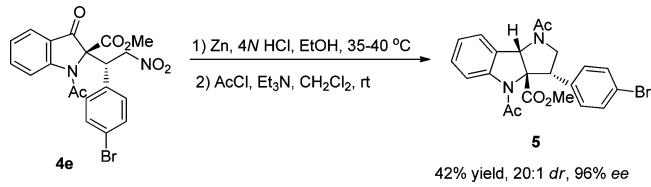
Based on the observed reactivity and experimental results of these Michael addition reactions, we propose that the reaction proceeds via a double activation model.¹³ As shown in Figure 2, the thiourea moiety of the catalyst 1a interacts via hydrogen bonding with the nitro group of the nitroalkene and enhances its electrophilicity while the tertiary amine deprotonates an acidic proton of the methyl 1-acetyl-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate, generating a ternary complex. The proposed activation model explains the stereochemical outcome of these Michael reactions and why *Si*-face attack at the nitroolefin is favored.

Table 2. Investigating the Scope of the Reaction^a

entry	R ¹	R ²	time (h)	yield (%)	dr ^b	ee ^c (%)
1	H	Ph	24	90 (4a)	>20:1	95
2	H	3-ClC ₆ H ₄	24	99 (4b)	>20:1	94
3	H	4-ClC ₆ H ₄	24	98 (4c)	>20:1	94
4	H	3-BrC ₆ H ₄	24	94 (4d)	>20:1	95
5	H	4-BrC ₆ H ₄	24	92 (4e)	>20:1	94
6	H	4-FC ₆ H ₄	24	95 (4f)	>20:1	95
7	H	3-NO ₂ C ₆ H ₄	24	95 (4g)	>20:1	94
8	H	4-NO ₂ C ₆ H ₄	24	93 (4h)	>20:1	92
9	H	4-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄	24	90 (4i)	>20:1	94
10	H	2-MeOC ₆ H ₄	72	90 (4j)	8:1	96
11	H	3-MeOC ₆ H ₄	72	98 (4k)	>20:1	87
12	H	3,4-(OCH ₂ O) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	24	95 (4l)	>20:1	93
13	H	4-MeC ₆ H ₄	24	97 (4m)	>20:1	96
14	H	3,4-(CH ₃) ₂ C ₆ H ₃	36	93 (4n)	>20:1	92
15	H	2-naphthyl	24	95 (4o)	>20:1	93
16	H	2-furyl	24	93 (4p)	>20:1	90
17 ^d	H	n-Bu	48	87 (4q)	>20:1	75
18	S-Br	Ph	48	94 (4r)	>20:1	90
19	6-Cl	Ph	48	95 (4s)	16:1	91
20	7-Me	Ph	48	88 (4t)	12:1	91

^aUnless otherwise noted, the reactions were carried out with **2** (0.1 mmol), **3** (0.2 mmol), and catalyst **1a** (0.01 mmol) in 1.0 mL of CH₂Cl₂ at 0 °C. ^bDetermined by ¹H NMR spectroscopic analysis of the crude reaction mixture. ^cDetermined by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. ^dThe reaction was performed at 20 °C.

Scheme 1. Synthetic Transformation

**Figure 2.** Proposed transition-state model in the Michael addition.

In conclusion, we have developed a bifunctional base/Bronsted acid-catalyzed asymmetric Michael addition reaction of methyl 1-acetyl-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate to nitroolefins affording indolin-3-ones with vicinal quaternary and tertiary stereocenters in excellent yields with high diastereo- and enantioselectivities. The corresponding product could be

readily converted to a structurally interesting heterocyclic architecture without loss of enantioselectivities.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

Typical Procedure for Michael Addition of Methyl 1-Acetyl-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate to Nitroolefins (Table 2). To a solution of β-nitrostyrene **3a** (30.0 mg, 0.2 mmol) and catalyst **1a** (6.0 mg, 0.01 mmol) in dry CH₂Cl₂ (1.0 mL) was added methyl 1-acetyl-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate **2** (24.0 mg, 0.1 mmol) at 0 °C. The reaction mixture was stirred at 0 °C until **2** was consumed as monitored by TLC. Then the reaction mixture was concentrated in vacuo, and the residue was purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel using petroleum ether/EtOAc as eluting reagent to afford the desired product **4a** 34.4 mg, in 90% yield. Unless otherwise specified, all products were synthesized according to the typical procedure.

(S)-Methyl 1-acetyl-2-((S)-2-nitro-1-phenylethyl)-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate (4a**):** 34.4 mg (90% yield); white solid; mp 146–148 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20} = -222$ (*c* 1.00, CHCl₃, 95% ee); IR (KBr) 3418, 1751, 1710, 1672, 1610, 1552, 1474, 1374, 1321, 1256, 1200, 997, 754, 698, 673, 596 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 7.77 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.52–7.48 (m, 1H), 7.17 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.07–6.98 (m, 4H), 6.89 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 5.95–5.85 (m, 1H), 5.11–5.01 (m, 2H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 2.30 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 193.1, 167.6, 166.0, 151.9, 137.8, 134.1, 128.4, 128.1, 127.8, 125.1, 124.6, 124.1, 114.3, 75.7, 75.1, 53.5, 45.4, 25.4; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd for [C₂₀H₂₂N₃O₆]⁺ [M + NH₄]⁺ 400.1503, found 400.1490. The enantiomeric excess was determined by HPLC with an OD-H column (hexane/i-PrOH = 70:30), 1.0 mL/min; major enantiomer *t*_R = 8.2 min, minor enantiomer *t*_R = 10.9 min.

(S)-Methyl 1-Acetyl-2-((S)-1-(3-chlorophenyl)-2-nitroethyl)-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate (4b**):** 41.2 mg (99% yield); white solid; mp 120–122 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20} = -199$ (*c* 1.00, CHCl₃, 94% ee); IR (KBr) 3411, 2955, 1754, 1713, 1665, 1608, 1553, 1472, 1376, 1344, 1246, 1202, 1082, 999, 946, 790, 764, 700, 588, 514 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 7.78 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.57–7.53 (m, 1H), 7.20 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.06–7.04 (m, 2H), 6.96–6.92 (m, 2H), 6.80 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.92–5.88 (m, 1H), 5.09–4.98 (m, 2H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 2.35 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 192.7, 167.7, 165.8, 151.8, 138.1, 136.2, 134.1, 129.4, 128.6, 125.2, 124.5, 124.4, 114.3, 75.3, 74.8, 53.6, 45.0, 25.4; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd for [C₂₀H₂₁ClN₃O₆]⁺ [M + NH₄]⁺ 434.1113, found 434.1115. The enantiomeric excess was determined by HPLC with an OD-H column (hexane/i-PrOH = 80:20), 1.0 mL/min; major enantiomer *t*_R = 12.6 min, minor enantiomer *t*_R = 16.1 min.

(S)-Methyl 1-Acetyl-2-((S)-1-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-nitroethyl)-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate (4c**):** 40.8 mg (98% yield); white solid; mp 140–142 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20} = -208$ (*c* 1.00, CHCl₃, 94% ee); IR (KBr) 3404, 2952, 1752, 1712, 1668, 1609, 1555, 1473, 1377, 1286, 1245, 1086, 984, 838, 764, 628, 527 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 7.78 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.58–7.54 (m, 1H), 7.21 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.07 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 5.91–5.87 (dd, *J* = 2.8 Hz, 13.6 Hz, 1H), 5.11–4.96 (m, 2H), 3.72 (s, 3H), 2.34 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 192.8, 167.7, 165.8, 151.9, 138.1, 134.3, 132.8, 129.2, 128.4, 125.3, 124.4, 114.5, 75.6, 74.9, 53.6, 44.9, 25.5; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd for [C₂₀H₂₁ClN₃O₆]⁺ [M + NH₄]⁺ 434.1113, found 434.1114. The enantiomeric excess was determined by HPLC with an OD-H column (hexane/i-PrOH = 70:30), 1.0 mL/min; major enantiomer *t*_R = 9.0 min, minor enantiomer *t*_R = 11.4 min.

(S)-Methyl 1-Acetyl-2-((S)-1-(3-bromophenyl)-2-nitroethyl)-3-oxoindoline-2-carboxylate (4d**):** 43.2 mg (94% yield); white solid; mp 160–162 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20} = -175$ (*c* 1.00, CHCl₃, 95% ee); IR (KBr) 3401, 2954, 1750, 1712, 1664, 1607, 1558, 1473, 1432, 1375, 1249, 1089, 1057, 986, 939, 900, 765, 700, 631, 588, 510 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 7.79 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.57–7.53 (m, 1H), 7.22–7.18 (m, 2H), 7.05 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.90 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 5.90 (m, 1H), 5.07–4.97 (m, 2H), 3.73 (s, 1H), 2.35 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm) 192.7, 167.7, 165.8, 151.7, 138.1, 136.4, 131.5, 129.6, 125.3, 124.5, 122.2, 114.3, 75.2, 74.8, 53.6,

128.1, 124.3, 121.2, 112.5, 66.0, 53.6, 53.1, 48.8, 24.5, 22.8; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for $[C_{22}H_{22}BrN_2O_4]^+ [M + H]^+$ 457.0766, found 457.0757. The enantiomeric excess was determined by HPLC with an AD-H column (hexane/*i*-PrOH = 80:20), 1.0 mL/min; major enantiomer t_R = 12.8 min, minor enantiomer t_R = 10.8 min.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

S Supporting Information

Experimental details, spectra data for the products, and X-ray crystallographic data of **4e** (CCDC 862138) and **5** (CCDC 862139) (CIF). This materia is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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