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Authors: Gang Zhao, Lijun Xu, Longhui YU, Jun Liu, Hongyu Wang, and Changwu Zheng

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Enantioselective Vinylogous Mannich-type Reactions to Construct CF₃S-Containing Stereocenters Catalysed by Chiral Quaternary Phosphonium Salts

Lijun Xu,^{a,b} Longhui Yu,^b Jun Liu,^b Hongyu Wang,^b Changwu Zheng,^c Gang Zhao^{b*}

^a Research Center of Resource Recycling Science and Engineering, College of Arts and Sciences Shanghai Polytechnic University, 2360 Jinhai Road, Shanghai 201209, China

- ^b Key Laboratory of Synthetic Chemistry of Natural Substances, Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences, 345 Lingling Road, Shanghai 200032, China, E-mail: zhaog@sioc.ac.cn
- ^c College of Pharmacy Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Shanghai 201203, China

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Abstract: A series of benzyl trifluoromethyl sulphides bearing a nitro group were utilized as CF₃S-containing building blocks to construct chiral CF3S-containing molecules via enantioselective vinylogous Mannich-type reactions. In such reactions, high vields and enantioselectivities were obtained using chiral quaternary phosphonium salts derived from amino acids. Moreover, a chiral cyclic urea bearing the CF₃S moiety was obtained from further transformation of the product.

Keywords: trifluoromethylthio-containing building blocks; a nitro group; enantioselectivities; vinylogous Mannich-type reactions; chiral quaternary phosphonium salts

The introduction of fluorine-containing moieties into drugs and biological molecules can greatly improve metabolic stability and other pharmacokinetic properties.^[1] In particular, a trifluoromethylthio group (CF₃S) can significantly improve the transmembrane permeability and enhance the metabolic stability of drug candidates due to its high lipophilicity ($\pi = 1.44$) and electron-withdrawing characteristics.^[2] Over the past decades, a great number of biologically active molecules containing CF₃S have been developed as important pharmacophores and agrochemicals, including methionine analogues, adenosine analogues, and cefazaflur (Figure 1).^[3] Recently, extensive efforts have been focused on the direct introduction of the CF₃S group into functionalized molecules,^[4] but few advances have been made in the construction of CF₃S-containing chiral centres. Generally, there are two different strategies for accomplishing the above goal: 1) direct trifluoromethylthiolation with electrophilic



trifluoromethylthiolating reagents via asymmetric catalysis;^[5] 2) the development of readily accessible CF₃S-containing building blocks for constructing chiral compounds. Until now, these strategies have emerged as the ideal approaches for the incorporation of CF₃S into small molecules. However, in comparison to the first direct method, the latter with higher atom economy has not been as extensively researched in the past few years. In 2017, Wang et al. developed efficient an approach for the enantioselective construction of the chiral $C(sp^3)$ -SCF₃ bond via Rh(II)- and Cu(I)-catalysed [2,3]sigmatropic rearrangements of sulfonium ylide (Scheme 1, a).^[6] Our group has also reported the enantioselective Mannich-type reactions using cyanosubstituted benzyl trifluoromethyl sulphides to construct tetrasubstituted carbon stereocenters via asymmetric dual-reagent catalysis (Scheme 1, b).^[7] The cyano group was crucial for enhancing the reactivity of substrate, but its presence resulted in difficulties with further transformation of the product. which thereby limited the possible applications of method. such



Scheme 1. Enantioselective reactions involved CF₃S-containing nucleophiles.

Hence, the development of other CF₃S-containing building blocks for constructing chiral compounds is still needed. Moreover, our attention has been drawn to the asymmetric vinylogous addition reaction for the formation of stereocenters. Fan et al.,^[8] Wang et al.,^[9] and Jørgensen et al.^[10] have independently reported an effective vinylogous Michael reaction of aryl methyl nucleophiles bearing strongly electronwithdrawing groups with α , β -unsaturated aldehydes. Herein, benzyl trifluoromethyl sulphide with an electron-withdrawing group (1)^[11] was evaluated as a simple and readily available CF₃S-containing building blocks for the asymmetric vinylogous Mannich-type addition (Scheme 1, c).

Initially, the vinylogous Mannich-type reaction using 2-nitrobenzyl trifluoromethyl sulphide (1a) with the N-Boc imine (2a) was examined via asymmetric dual-reagent catalysis (Table 1, entry 1). However, no product was observed under the previous conditions. In view of the excellent properties of quaternary phosphonium salts derived from amino acids in the asymmetric synthesis,^[12] utilizing such salts might improve the above enantioselective reactions. The corresponding product 3 could be obtained with 90% yield as a mixture of 83% diastereoisomers and of ee major diastereoisomers when the reaction was carried out using catalyst 4a and Cs₂CO₃ (Table 1, entry 2). After the synthesis of the diastereoisomers, control experiments were also performed to elucidate the vital role of the nitro group. For example, the reaction with BnSCF₃ without the nitro group (1b) could not proceed under the catalytic system. Additionally, other electron-withdrawing groups such as the ester (1c) and cyano groups (1d) were also tested, but no reactions were catalysed by 4a (Table 1, entry 3-5). Moreover, the CF₃S-containing building blocks that were meta-

 $\label{eq:constraint} \begin{array}{c} \textbf{Table 1} & Preliminary \ research \ on \ the \ activated \ aryl \ sulfanes.^{[a]} \end{array}$



[a] The reactions were performed with 1 (0.1 mmol), 2a (0.2 mmol), 4a (10 mol%) in the presence of Cs_2CO_3 (0.2 mmol) in toluene (1.0 mL) and stirred at room temperature and the product 3 was obtained as mixtures of diastereoisomers.

[b] Isolated yields of 3.

[c] The dr and ee values were determined by chiral HPLC analysis; ee values of the major diastereoisomers.

[d] The condition of the asymmetric dual-reagent catalysis was shown in the supporting information.

and para-substituted with nitro groups (1e, 1f) were then investigated under the same conditions (Table 1, entry 6-7). Only the para-substituted substrate was suitable the reaction but with for low enantioselectivity. No reaction proceeded when the *meta*-substituted benzyl trifluoromethyl sulphide was used in the reaction. Therefore, the electronic properties of the nitro group and its ortho-position on the ring could enhance the acidity of the benzy protons^[13] and thereby trigger the desired transformation via vinylogous Mannich-type addition. Furthermore, various protecting groups of the imine were also tested, including *p*-toluenesulfonyl (Ts) and benzyloxycarbonyl (Cbz), but the corresponding yields and enantioselectivities did not improve with such protecting groups.

To further improve the enantioselectivity of the reaction, various catalysts, inorganic bases, and solvents were investigated. As shown in Table 2, no desired products were observed when NaOAc, Na₂CO₃, or K₂CO₃ were used as the base (Table 2,

BocHN H

Table 2. Optimization of chiral catalysts as well as other conditions.^[a]

		$1a \qquad 2a \qquad Cat. 4 (10 mol%) base(2.0 equiv.) + Ph SCF_3 NO_2$								
		F ₃ C	BR NH O NH Br HN	h ₂ Bn Bn CF ₃ F ₃ C	$ \begin{array}{c} & \oplus \\ & Ph_2 \\ & Ph_2 \\ & Br \\ & Gr \\ & CF_3 \end{array} $		+			
		4a : R ¹ = Bn	ĊF ₃	4g : R ² = 3-N	IO ₂ C ₆ H ₄					
		4c : R ¹ = Ph	4e: X= O 4f: X = S	4h : R ² = 4-N 4i : R ² = 3.5-	IO ₂ C ₆ H ₄ (CEa)2CaHa					
		4d : R ¹ = 2-(<i>S</i>)- ^{<i>s</i>} Bu		H I. IX = 0,0-						
Entry	Cat.	Sol.	Base	T (°C)	Yield (%) ^[b]	$dr^{[c]}$	ee (%) ^[c]			
1	4 a	toluene	NaOAc	rt.	N.P.	_				
2	4a	toluene	Na_2CO_3	rt.	N.P.	—	_			
3	4a	toluene	K_2CO_3	rt.	N.P.	-				
4	4a	toluene	Cs_2CO_3	rt.	90	83:17	83			
5	4a	toluene	KUH Ca CO	rt	91	01:39	29			
07	4a 4b	toluene	Cs_2CO_3	0	89	80:14	90			
/ Q	40	toluono	Cs_2CO_3	0	09	20.12	67			
9	40 4d	toluene	Cs_2CO_3	0	90	33.67	17			
10	4e	toluene	$C_{32}CO_{3}$	ŏ	81	71.39	-16			
11	4f	toluene	$C_{82}CO_3$	ŏ	77	64:36	6			
12	4g	toluene	$C_{82}CO_3$	ŏ	88	90:10	9ž			
13	4ĥ	toluene	Cs_2CO_3	Õ	91	72:28	11			
14	4 i	toluene	Cs_2CO_3	Ō	90	79:21	8			
15	4g	DCM	Cs_2CO_3	0	89	71:29	30			
16	4ğ	Et_2O	Cs_2CO_3	0	68	88:12	78			
17	4 g	THF	Cs_2CO_3	0	61	66:34	7			
18	4 g	MeCN	Cs_2CO_3	0	86	53:47	Rac.			
19	4g	Mesitylene	Cs_2CO_3	0	91	90:10	91			

[a] Unless otherwise noted, the reactions were performed with **1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), the chiral chiral quaternary phosphonium salts **4** (10 mol%) in the presence of base (0.2 mmol) in solvent (1.0 mL) and stirred for 48 h and the product **3aa** was obtained as mixtures of diastereoisomers.

[b] Isolated yields of **3aa**; N.P. : no products.

[c] The *dr* and *ee* values were determined by chiral HPLC analysis; *ee* values of the major diastereoisomers.

entries 1–4). The reaction with the strong base KOH produced the desired product with good yield but decreased stereoselectivity (Table 2, entry 5). We found that both diastereoselectivity and enantioselectivity of the corresponding products could be greatly increased by decreasing the reaction temperature to 0 °C, albeit with extended reaction time (Table 2, entry 6). Next, a series of chiral bifunctional quaternary phosphonium salts were synthesized and evaluated as catalysts. Among the different catalysts screened, the chiral skeleton derived from L-phenylalanine performed best in terms of enantioselectivity and diastereoselectivity (Table 2, entry 6 versus entries 7-9). Moreover, the amide group of bifunctional chiral phosphine catalysts seemed to be crucial for enantiocontrol in the reaction. Replacement of this amide moiety with thiourea (4e)

or urea (**4f**) led to inferior results (Table 2, entries 10 and 11). Further investigations determined that the different benzyl groups of the phosphonium centre were also crucial to the enantioselectivity (Table 2, entries 12–14). Catalyst **4g**, which contained the nitrogroup on the meta-position, performed the best under the same reaction conditions with 88% total isolated yield and 92% *ee* of the major diastereoisomers (Table 2, entry 12). We also investigated the effect of various solvents on the Mannich-type reactions, but no improvement in enantioselectivity was observed (entries 15–19).

With these optimized reaction conditions, we then turned our attention towards exploring the generality of the method with various N-Boc imines (2). As summarized in Table 3, different substituted chiral CF₃S-containing amines were obtained in moderate mostly over 90% *ee* of the major diastereoisomers to excellent yields of two diastereoisomers (69–93%), and

Table 3. Scope of the Mannich-type reaction catalyzed by quaternary phosphonium catalysis.^[a]



[a] Unless otherwise noted, the reactions were performed with **1a** (0.1 mmol), **2** (0.2 mmol), chiral catalyst **4g** (10 mol%) in the presence of $Cs_2CO_3(0.2 \text{ mmol})$ in toluene (1.0 mL) at 0 °C for 48 h; The product **3** was obtained as mixtures of diastereoisomers; Isolated yields of **3**; The *dr* and *ee* values were determined by chiral HPLC analysis; *ee* values of the major diastereoisomers.

[b] The dr value was determined by ¹ H NMR of the product; No ee value of the minor diastereoisomers.

moderate levels of diastereoselectivity, including alkyl (3ab, 3ad-3ai), alkoxyl (3ac) and halide (3aj-**3al**) groups, at different positions on the phenyl group of imines. Generally, substrates with an electrondonating group produced higher yields and ee values of major diastereoisomers compared with those of other substrates bearing halide groups (3ab versus 3aj, 3ak). Particularly, the aryl imine bearing dimethyl groups on the phenyl reacted efficiently to produce 3ai in 93% yield and 98% ee of major diastereoisomers. While the other aryl imine possessing a CF₃ group produced the chiral amine 3am in 89% yield and 94% ee of major diastereoisomers, which was probably due to steric effects. Additionally, polycyclic and heteroaryl aromatic imines were viable under the reaction conditions, with corresponding products (**3an–3aq**) in good yields (80–90%) and high enantioselectivities of major diastereoisomers (82–93% *ee*).

Next, the influence of different substituents on the CF₃S-containing nucleophiles (1) on the vinylogou Mannich-type reaction was further evaluated. As presented in Table 4, halide pronucleophiles produced the desired products in 92-94% yields (5a-5c) and 92–96% ee of major diastereoisomers. Additionally, the reaction proceeded smoothly with the C_2F_5 substituted sulphide to produce the product yield and 95% 5d in 91% ee of major diastereoisomers. The CF₃CF₂S group has been proven to be an important moiety in several agrochemical and pharmaceutical compounds, [14] and a few methods for the preparation of analogous

CF₃CF₂S-containing compounds have been described in literature.^[15]

To demonstrate the modifiability of the products, compound **3ab** (96% *ee* of major diastereoisomers) was subjected to the removal of the Boc group,

Table 4. Substrate scope of the CF₃S-containing building blocks.^[a]



[a] Unless otherwise noted, the reactions were performed with 1 (0.1 mmol), 2a (0.2 mmol), chiral catelyst 4g (10 mol%) in the presence of $C_{s_2}CO_3$ (0.20 mmol) in toluene (1.0 mL) at 0 °C for 48 h; The product 5 was obtained as mixtures of diastereoisomers; Isolated yields of 5; The *dr* and *ee* values were determined by chiral HPLC analysis; *ee* values of the major diastereoisomers.

[b] The dr value was determined by ¹ H NMR of the product.

followed by treatment with 3,5-dibromobenzoic acid to produce the chiral amide **6** in 65% yield and 86% *ee* over two steps (Scheme 2, a). The absolute configuration of the chiral amide **6** was confirmed by X-ray crystallographic analysis, from which the absolute structure of the major diastereoisomers was deduced to be (1R, 2R). Additionally, compound **3aa** was converted to the chiral cyclic urea **7** in 53% yield while preserving the high enantioselectivity (Scheme 2, b). Notably, the seven-membered heterocyclic 1,3-benzodiazepin-2-one skeletons have constituted a core structural unit of many bioactive compounds,^[16] such as compound **8**, which have been used a calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) receptor antagonists for the treatment of migraines.^[17]





Based on our previous works, $^{[12a-12d]}$ the mechanism of this catalyst system was considered to form a possible transition state as illustrated below. We proposed that the amide moiety of catalyst **4g** might activate the *N*-Boc imine via H-bonding interactions, while the phosphonium centre might direct the nucleophile through static electronic interactions. The nitronate anion derived from 1a was from the *Si* face of the



Figure 2. Possible transition state.

imine to avoid steric repulsion between the phenyl groups of the imine and the catalyst (Figure 2).

In summary, we have developed asymmetric vinylogous Mannich-type reactions to develop CF₃S-containing stereocenters via quaternary phosphonium catalysts. The nitro group in the substrate could be essential for the progress of the reaction due to its electronic properties and ortho-position on the ring. Additionally, the product can be further functionalized to give а chiral tetrahydrobenzodiazepin-2-one, which is a potentially useful drug development candidate, in high efficiency while maintaining high enantioselectivity. Moreover, further investigation of the mechanism and synthetic applications of this transformation are underway in our lab.

Experimental Section

A mixture of the CF_3S -containing building blocks 1 (0.1 mmol), imine 2 (0.2 mmol) and catalyst 4g (10 mol%) in toluene (1.0 mL) were cooled to 0 °C before Cs₂CO₃ (0.2 mmol) was introduced. The reaction was stirred for 48 h and completed according to TLC analysis. The crude mixture were warmed to the room temperature and quenched by water (3.0 mL). The aqueous phase was extracted with EtOAc (3 \times 5.0 mL), and the combined organic layers were dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄ and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by flash petroleum column chromatography (silica gel: ether/AcOEt = 10:1) to afford the products **3** or **5**.

X-Ray Crystallographic Data of 6

CCDC-1526782 contains supplementary (6) the crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be The obtained free charge Cambridge of from Centre Crystallographic Data via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif.

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COMMUNICATION

Enantioselective Vinylogous Mannich-type Reactions to Construct CF₃S-Containing Stereocenters Catalysed by Chiral Quaternary Phosphonium Salts

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Lijun Xu,^{a,b} Longhui Yu,^b Jun Liu,^b Hongyu Wang,^b Changwu Zheng,^c Gang Zhao^b*

